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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[BETWEEN TWO STOOLS.]

THE FAMILY DIAMONDS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Marigold," "Breaking the Charm," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XVII.

Come, woo me, woo me; for now I am in a holiday humour, and like enough to consent. *Shakespeare.*

A PRIVATE marriage made Miss Venner the lawful wife of Frank Burgoyne and her ambition was gratified at last, but she was not happy.

Days glided by and she found herself the almost unnoticed companion of a soulless, melancholy man, who sat for hours wrapt up in himself. He was never less alone than when alone. No smile of welcome greeted her when she entered the room where he was. If she received a kiss from him it was an unwilling one and she had to ask for it.

Was this tame, spiritless being the husband she had dreamed of, worked for, sinned for, and hoped so much from? Was this the only reward she was to receive after all her labour and wicked industry? Until lately he had been so different. Formerly he was light-hearted, gentlemanly, considerate in his manner, and especially attentive to ladies. Now he was quite the reverse. In vain she dressed herself attractively and tried to make the most of herself. A new costume did not elicit a glance from him, and a bonnet that would have driven Hyde Park frequenters mad with envy and admiration was no more to him than a common straw.

She forgot that he was what she had made him. The troubles that had befallen him through her agency had preyed upon his mind and rendered him another man. How could he think without emotion of his father's death and the cause of it, or of his loss of fortune, his disgrace, and the singular and to him inexplicable fate of his beloved Agnes, who was now lost to him for ever?

If he was tame and spiritless, melancholy and reserved, absent and cold, whom had she to blame for the result but himself?

It was evening. Wise stood upon the dessert table and remained untasted. Cigars of a choice brand were displayed in a box, but they were untouched. Scarcely a word had Frank Burgoyne spoken during dinner time. He confined himself to the commonest conventional civilities, and now he was sitting back in a chair gazing dreamily at some peaches whose rosy sides reminded him of the lovely cheeks of his unfortunate Agnes.

"I am going to-morrow morning to London for a few weeks," exclaimed the governess. "Be careful how you show yourself in the neighbourhood, Frank. The more secluded you live the safer you will be."

"I seldom go beyond the limits of the Tower," he answered, carelessly.

"You do not seem to mind my leaving you alone," she continued, restlessly plucking some grapes from a bunch she had before her.

"Why should I stand in the way of your enjoyment? If London will please you more than the country by all means go. I cannot accompany you, owing to the peculiar circumstances in which I am situated."

"Do you not love me?"

There was a depth of anxiety in the tone which he could not fathom.

"No," he replied, calmly. "I try to respect you as a friend, but I cannot love you. All this you know long ago. My heart was given to the unhappy Agnes. She has taken it abroad with her. Leave me here a prisoner. I will try to think well of and respect you, for I owe much to you."

"Much," she repeated, indignantly. "If it had not been for me you would either have been a fugitive from justice, wanting a shelter, or a prisoner in a common jail, doing menial work, clad in the prison garb and having lost your name in the distinctive number on your back. I have made a mistake, but I will not reproach you. Stay here until I can think what it will be best for us to do. Emigration to America is always open to one or both of us."

He made no answer, relapsing into one of his absent moods, and Miss Venner, now Mrs. Burgoyne,

left him to his meditations. She blamed herself now for the precipitance with which she had married him. Never did a woman regret a union more. Instead of espousing the high-spirited, gentlemanly, amusing Frank Burgoyne, she seemed to have married his shadow, or some one remotely resembling him, for he was a parody upon his former self.

She went to London as she had said, leaving Agnes Waldon a captive in the chamber of mirrors in which she was attended by the old servant in the Tower. No books, no feminine work was allowed her to beguile the monotony of her imprisonment. All day long Agnes had nothing to do but to stare at her hideous appearance or shut her eyes to hide the disgusting sight which the tell-tale mirrors were everlastingly revealing to her.

Frank had the solace of reading, for the Tower was well supplied with books, and he spent hours in the library, seldom taking a walk until dark, for he feared the law more than he dreaded Miss Venner, who called herself his wife. His mind was in a state of stupor. He required rest to nerve himself, and the departure of his wife for London was a positive relief to him.

In time, when he got over the various shocks he had received, he might be able to decide upon his future course and what he ought to do for the best. Love his wife he never could, but he might give her his friendship, if she continued to deserve it, or there was another alternative, which presented itself to him at times—he could fly from the Tower and be his own master once more. This prospect was remote, however, he was ill and weak and really not strong enough to take a decided step.

Miss Venner's intentions were to seek distraction in London society, into which she could introduce herself through the agency of Mrs. Burgoyne, who had removed to town with her children and sent her a pressing invitation to visit her.

"I will leave them both," she said to herself, "prisoners in the Lone Tower. Frank cannot see his Agnes and Agnes cannot behold her Frank. Oh, why was I mad enough to marry such a worm? Not one

word of love have I received from him since I quitted the altar as his bride. Perhaps when I return his mood may be different. If not I shall despise and hate where I formerly so fondly loved."

Mrs. Burgoyne received Miss Venner with the cordiality their long intercourse together dictated. The governess concealed the fact of her marriage with Mrs. Burgoyne's stepson and represented herself as single. The major's wife and she were bound to one another by no ordinary ties. Miss Venner had done much and risked much to place her in the position she held. They knew each other's secret and they were of necessity friends.

Gentlemen moving in the highest ranks of society visited Mrs. Burgoyne, who, having heard from Miss Venner that she had received a legacy from a rich aunt, represented her as an heiress.

One of the most distinguished young noblemen of the day, the Earl of Sunderland, was much struck with Miss Venner. He was poor, somewhat dissipated, but handsome and engaging.

It occurred to Mrs. Burgoyne that she could bring about a match between the two, and she was not long in disclosing her plan to her protégée.

"You must marry the Earl of Sunderland, my dear," she exclaimed, one day.

"I, Mrs. Burgoyne," said Miss Venner, "what is there in a poor, insignificant creature like myself to attract a nobleman?"

"First of all you are good looking and dress attractively. Secondly, you have money. How much did you say your aunt left you?"

"More than a hundred thousand pounds," replied Miss Venner.

As a matter of fact no such old aunt had died leaving her money, yet she had the command of a considerable sum.

How she became possessed of it is at present a mystery, which will be disclosed as our story proceeds.

"Leave all to me and you shall be the Countess of Sunderland," said Mrs. Burgoyne, confidently.

The prospect of becoming a countess and the loved wife of a handsome young nobleman was intoxicating to the ambitious governess.

She thought of Frank—of her husband—but dismissed him with a laugh.

"If I have any chance in that quarter," she said, to herself, with a bitter laugh, "I will soon dispose of the spiritless outcast who calls me wife but to mock me with the empty resemblance of a love that does not exist. There are dungeons beneath the Lone Tower. What is to prevent me from shutting him up in one with Agnes, and leaving them to starve to death or devour one another when mad with hunger and despair?"

She was quite capable of the commission of such a horrible deed and did not shrink from its contemplation.

In the meantime the season glided on. Miss Venner and the Earl of Sunderland frequently met.

One day she playfully showed him her pass-book at a celebrated bank and he saw that she had more than a hundred thousand pounds to her credit.

When he returned to his hotel in Jermyn Street, St. James's, he found a friend of his waiting for him.

This friend was named Tom Deepwater, had been at Eton and Oxford, therefore he was presumably a gentleman.

No one knew how he lived, but he had rich and influential friends, could play billiards well, and was expert at cards.

Deepwater found the Earl of Sunderland in a sentimental mood and asked him the cause of it.

"The fact is, my dear Tom," said the earl, "I am in love."

"With what? Money I hope. You want it badly enough."

"Partly with money, but also with its possessor."

"Who may this paragon of wealth and beauty be? No ordinary woman would captivate you, I know, for you have been in love with half a dozen different women this last six months, to my certain knowledge."

"Her name is Venner."

"Mrs. Burgoyne's friend?" asked Tom Deepwater, his dark countenance becoming slightly pale.

"The same. She has been a governess. Now I have a weakness for governesses. They know how to keep a man in order, and I want some one to look after me, and put the break on, as we say, when we are going down hill, for I am inclined to go too fast. I know the girl has money."

"How?" asked Deepwater, anxiously.

"Never mind how. I know it; and I mean to marry her if she will have me. Will you, Tom, go as my friend to Mrs. Burgoyne and try and arrange the matter for me? Pave the way, and if I have any chance let me know."

"I will run up to-night if you like," replied Deep-

water. "It is Thursday, and I think Mrs. Burgoyne always receives on a Thursday."

"Yes. It is her night. Go and do your best for me. I like the governess. There is something about her pretty thin face which makes me believe she will be just the sort of wife for me."

Deepwater kept his word.

In the evening he sought Mrs. Burgoyne, who was glad to see him, knowing him to be the inseparable companion of the earl.

"Why have you not brought your friend with you?" she asked, with a smile.

"He was not well. A sort of champagne headache, you know. The fact is he is so fast that I shall have to cut him," replied Deepwater. "Not at all the sort of man I should like to marry my sister, if I had one."

"Indeed, I am sorry to hear that," replied Mrs. Burgoyne. "Be careful not to speak disparagingly of his lordship before Miss Venner. I may tell you she is a little smitten in that quarter. Not that I think she would mind, because ladies are very indulgent to young men in these days. Reformed rakes make the best husbands, they say."

"A fallacy," said Deepwater. "Depend upon it that they do not."

"Here is Miss Venner. Talk to her about it. Being a young lady of the world, she will no doubt be able to give you an opinion. Fanny, my dear, Mr. Deepwater is speaking upon a most interesting subject to both of us, but as I have to go and see the children, will you be amiable enough to entertain him while I am absent?"

"With pleasure," replied Miss Venner, adding as Mrs. Burgoyne left the room:

"Pray, Mr. Deepwater, what is this very interesting subject which engages your attention?"

Deepwater was a little confused for a moment, but he soon rallied and answered, boldly:

"Marriage, Miss Venner. I contend that a well-known rake will not make a good husband. Mrs. Burgoyne differs with me."

"So do I. Oh! if you only knew how I adore men who have had the courage to love a dozen women and then settle down to give their hearts to only one."

"Can that one depend upon retaining the worn-out and battered heart? That is the question, Miss Venner."

"Worn out and battered," she repeated. "Oh, a heart can never be in that condition while it continues to beat."

"Can it beat with the same affectionate force as at first? I wonder that a lady of your perception can entertain such an opinion. For instance, I have never yet loved any girl, and I will undertake to say that my love would be worth more to a woman than that of—of—say my friend Sunderland's."

"As for never having loved, Mr. Deepwater, we have only your word for it," replied Miss Venner, with a pretty laugh; "and men are a little given occasionally to telling stories about their loves and the state of their hearts. I declare that my experience goes to prove the man who has been dissipated and become reformed is the most charming; he is full of anecdote, never wearisome; he understands how to manage a woman, while only those who have intimately known many women can possibly aspire to the acquisition of this grand art, whereas a man who loves a girl for the first time may not know his own mind. He may grow tired of her and find that he has missed his ideal, which he discovers when too late in another, and he sulks because he is too virtuous to go after her and leave the unfortunate victim of his mistaken affections, who is a sufferer because the virtuous young man had not left his mother's apron strings sufficiently long to understand women and know his own mind. By all means give me a man of the world, who, if I may paraphrase Homer, has, like Ulysses, seen many women and many lands."

"Really, Miss Venner, you lay down a very extraordinary law," said Deepwater, biting his lips.

"It is not law. I simply explain my inclination. There are many broad-and-butter misses scarcely emancipated from the restraint of their boarding-schools who would disagree with me altogether, but I do not say that they would not agree with me when they are older and have had experience."

"One would think that you had suffered through an affair of the heart," said Deepwater, with a searching glance.

"Not at all; but I have profited by the example of a friend," answered Miss Venner, thinking of her affection for and disappointment in Frank Burgoyne. "This friend of mine went perfectly mad over a man, Mr. Deepwater. Fancy her being so silly! Can you imagine anything more absurd?"

"I am a man, you know, and the case must be put in a different way. I cannot see anything ridiculous in my going mad about your charms, Miss Venner."

"My charms! Now, Mr. Deepwater, you want to

make fun of a poor little thing like me. I forbid you. You and I are friends; we can never be anything more. There is an end of compliments," said the governess, with a keen glance, which Deepwater took to heart at once and remembered.

He bit his lips and saw in a moment it would be useless to speak more plainly to her at present, though he really cared for her, and wished to marry her if only for the money she was said to possess. This was the reason why he was so anxious to undermine his friend Lord Sunderland in the opinion of Mrs. Burgoyne and her visitor.

"Now I will tell you about my poor friend," said Miss Venner, "if you will promise me not to interrupt me nonsensically any more. She was a charming girl and very innocent, so innocent as to follow up a man incessantly who did not care for her one bit. She did all sorts of things to make him love her. He would not. Some things she did were so desperate I do not like to think of them, although she conquered him at last and he did marry her. Imagine her disappointment when she found him as cold as a stone, as unsociable as a deaf and dumb man—always napping, reading, or sulking. Never did he utter a cheering word, and the poor dear to save herself from melancholy madness ran away from him. There was disappointment for you, and this young man of whom I speak was a man of one love."

"Ah, I perceive," he loved another," replied Deepwater, "in which case your impulsive friend was properly punished for lusting him down and taking him away from her rival."

Miss Venner blushed slightly.

"You have an awkward way of saying things, Mr. Deepwater," she answered. "I have a great regard for my friend, and if you consent again upon my little tale please not to say anything against her, whose only fault was, I will venture, love."

Deepwater said no more, but as he walked home he mused to himself:

"That little woman is a cleverer for me. I wonder if she was speaking about herself when she told me that story. At any rate she has her secret. Still I am so frightfully poor and so well known about town now that I must get hold of a woman with money somehow."

He was not a man to be discouraged at a rebuff at the outset, and he hoped that he might be successful in the end.

"If I cannot have her," he replied, between his clenched teeth, "Lord Sunderland shall not. I know enough about his private affairs and am sufficiently in his confidence to ruin his chance in that or any other quarter."

Deepwater was as deceitful and treacherous as Lord Sunderland was weak, amiable, and confiding. True, the latter was extravagant and dissipated, but he was not bad.

If Frank Deepwater could prevent it Lord Sunderland would never call Miss Venner his wife.

CHAPTER XVII.

Real delight does not so much consist in the enjoyment of happiness as in the pursuit of it. Joy frequently falls upon its possessors, who long for fresh excitement. *The Philosopher.*

So changeable is the heart of woman that when Miss Venner began to love Lord Sunderland she forgot Frank Burgoyne and thought that she had never loved before. She despised Frank and even hated him. Thinking what she had done to gain him, how she had sinned for him, and to what unmaidenly devices she had been obliged to have recourse to, in order to win his unwilling heart, she despised and hated herself too.

Her pallor had increased and care had laid its finger on her marble brow, but under the influence of her new fancy those traces of a crushed heart or a mistaken affection became eradicated.

Once more she was radiant and lively, for a woman is nothing if she has no one to love. Her usually impassive countenance lighted up with a glow which was born of her fresh love, and she felt confident she should be happy if she could only call his lordship her husband.

Thoughts of Frank and Agnes disquieted her at times, but she was not in the habit of giving way to silly fears, and she determined that if there was any chance of marrying Lord Sunderland she would sacrifice herself to those encumbrances in a terrible manner.

The old woman who was her only servant at the Tower wrote to her stating that the young man did not read so much and was always taking long walks in the country, while the black girl did nothing but weep.

Poor Frank! no wonder that he sought consolation in solitary walks. He had much to think of, and much to regret. Poor Agnes! little wonder that she did nothing but weep in her prison of mirrors, for hers was indeed a hard fate to bear.

The day after Mr. Deepwater's visit to Mrs. Burgoyne Lord Sunderland called, dressed in the height of fashion—dressed indeed as only an English gentleman with exquisite taste and plenty of money—or, what is as good at the time, unlimited credit with West-end tradesmen—can hope to dress.

"My dear Lord Sunderland," said Mrs. Burgoyne as he was ushered into her splendidly furnished drawing-room about three o'clock in the afternoon, "enchanted to see you. There is my poor little friend Miss Venner constantly asking about you."

"Really you flatter me," said his lordship, stroking his tawny moustache.

"Not in the least. It is you, who honour my poor household. The dear child is foolish enough to be éprise de vous, but I must let you talk to one another alone. There are a few questions I should like to ask you though. Miss Venner has been with me so long I cannot tell you what an interest I take in her. She was my children's governess for many years. I feel towards her as toward my own daughter, and I should not like her affection to be placed on an unworthy object."

"You speak harshly, Mrs. Burgoyne. I hope—" "Tut, tut, tut," interrupted Mrs. Burgoyne; "I know what you young men of the present day are, and I really must put a few questions to you. Miss Venner is so simple, loving, confiding, just what a maidenly girl ought to be. Now look upon me as your confessor and consider that open confession is good for the soul."

"Willingly. When a man has nothing to conceal why should he shrink from confession?"

"Why indeed. Now tell me. Have you ever loved before?"

"Never."

"You have no ties? You are perfectly free?"

"Perfectly."

"And you come to me as a candidate for my little pet's hand, in all earnestness?" said Mrs. Burgoyne.

"I have come to ask you to use your influence in my behalf with Miss Venner," replied his lordship, "because I love her dearly, and I always felt that a governess was to be my fate. I am a little unwell and have spent more money than I could afford, yet I am not a pauper, and if my title and what I have left are a sufficient equivalent for her love and her fortune I am willing to marry her."

"Perhaps she may not consent. I will go and speak to her. Depend upon my good offices. But there is one more thing. Report has mixed up your name with that of a popular actress, Clarice Howard."

"Scandal! my dear Mrs. Burgoyne," exclaimed Lord Sunderland, "pure scandal, I assure you. Miss Howard may have commanded my admiration on the stage as an actress, for people say she is talented, but nothing more."

"I am satisfied. Be good enough to wait here, my lord, while I seek Miss Venner, and I hope she will consent to see you and that the result of your interview may be all you desire," said Mrs. Burgoyne, as she swept from the room, her long silk dress trailing grandly behind her with that indescribable noise or rather rustling which the French call *frou-frou*.

She sought Miss Venner, who was waiting for her in her boudoir.

A pretty dark-haired girl sat near the window making a dress, for Miss Venner was not above the petty ceremonies of life, and having good taste of her own, liked to have her dresses made at home.

This little dressmaker was named Kate Berry, and as she was a very insignificant little person, according to Mrs. Burgoyne's idea, she did not hesitate to speak before her.

The governess had been reading Byron's "Bride of Abydos" and put down the book as her friend entered.

"Everything has happened as well as you could desire, my dear," said Mrs. Burgoyne. "He is here and has actually proposed to me for your hand. I have questioned him carefully, and I think he is one to whom you may safely confide your future happiness."

Miss Venner's face flushed with pleasure and triumphant pride.

Her new dream of becoming a countess was about to be realized, and she thought little of the poor captives in the Lone Tower. They might suffer and be silent; soon a time would come when they would be silent for ever.

"Shall I go to him?" she asked.

"Not yet. Let him wait. It does not look well to be too impatient. In half an hour you may seek him, and after he has asked you to be his wife you will admit, I hope, that the debt of gratitude I owe you is settled. You have done much for me; shall I have satisfied you in making you the wife of an earl?"

"Oh, yes, a thousand times over," exclaimed Miss Venner.

"On second thoughts send for him here; you are surrounded by flowers and birds, this boudoir is charming, you reign in the midst of its splendours like a queen. I am going out in the carriage with the children; when I return I hope to see your dear face smiling."

Mrs. Burgoyne kissed her and went away, leaving Miss Venner wrapped in a delicious reverie.

How much more delightful it would be to have the Earl of Sunderland for a husband than Frank Burgoyne. She wondered how she could ever have been so stupid as to have loved Frank when there were so many men in the world so much more agreeable.

But in the old days she was poor, and had been only a governess, now she was the friend, the intimate of Mrs. Burgoyne, and possessed of mysterious wealth, supposed to be the legacy left by an aged relation.

"A few minutes elapsed, and the dressmaker, looking up, said:

"Pardon me, miss, but did I understand you were going to get married?"

Miss Venner looked up so sharply that poor Kate Berry missed a stitch.

"It would be more becoming in a person in your position to attend to her work instead of listening to people's conversation," explained the governess.

"I beg your pardon again, miss," replied the dressmaker. "But I thought you might give me the order for your wedding trousseau. I work for a well-known firm in Bond Street, and I should get a small commission for introducing your order. That is all."

"I will think about it. Go on with your work," replied Miss Venner, shortly.

The little dressmaker pricked her finger and her face flushed angrily, but she knew her position, too well to say anything.

For some time the needle was plied busily, and then Miss Venner exclaimed:

"Go down to the servants' hall and get your dinner or lunch, or whatever you call it, and send Mrs. Burgoyne's maid to me."

Kate Berry put her work on one side and, shaking off a few pieces of cotton and silk from her dress, she left the room, while Miss Venner arranged her hair before the glass, admiring her appearance and thinking that she looked pretty and captivating.

Scarcely had Kate reached the top of the staircase than she met a handsome young gentleman, who exclaimed:

"Where is Miss Venner? I suppose you are one of the servants here."

It was the Earl of Sunderland, who, weary with waiting, and having heard Mrs. Burgoyne's carriage depart, thought he was forgotten.

Kate stopped abruptly, looked at the gentleman who had accepted her, and asked:

"Arthur, is it you?"

"By Jove!" exclaimed the young nobleman, "what are you doing here, Kate? I—I did not expect to see you."

"You know very well I am a dressmaker," answered Kate. "Dressmakers go everywhere. Fine ladies are economical now-a-days, and milliners charge so much it is cheaper to have things done at home. If you give a girl eighteen pence a day, and something to eat and drink, you can get a great deal of work out of her from nine till seven, if you keep her under your eyes. Tell me though, Arthur, what you want with Miss Venner."

"Oh, nothing—nothing particular," replied his lordship, slightly embarrassed.

"Is it you she is going to marry?"

"No, no! Oh, dear, no, my dear child," said Sunderland, gaily.

"I am glad of that," answered Kate Berry. "Because you told me when you met me in Piccadilly last winter and the next week took me to the play that you would never love any one else. It is so long since I saw you that I thought you had forgotten me. I have sent many letters to your club, addressed to your name, Mr. Williams, and you have given me no answer. It was Mr. Williams you said, was it not?"

"Yes, my dear—Thomas Williams. You are quite right."

"When shall I see you again? You spoke so nicely to me and promised to take me to Richmond to dinner. Oh, I should so dearly like to go. When will you take me?"

The earl reflected a moment.

"Next Sunday," he replied. "Meet me at one o'clock at Hyde Park Corner, right-hand side, and I will pick you up in my brougham."

Kate clasped her hands with joy.

"I am so glad I have met you," she said. "You will be sure to meet me, will you not?"

"Quite sure. Run along and be a good child. There is something for you to buy a new bonnet," replied the earl, slipping a sovereign into her hand.

Kate tripped away gleefully to go to dinner in the

servants' hall, leaving his lordship biting the tips of his lavender gloves.

"What a bore it is," he said to himself, "that a man cannot flirt with a pretty girl without the risk of meeting her in the very house where he is paying his addresses to the lady he wants to make his wife. I thought this little one was dead or had forgotten me. I have not seen her for three months, and that is an age. If she had not forgotten me by Jove I had her. One meets so many new faces in three months. It is such a long while in London," he added, with a sigh.

While he was hesitating which way to go a ladies-maid came up to him and asked him to follow her to Miss Venner, who wished to see him. He was conducted to the boudoir where the governess, who was looking charmingly demure and as softly strict, if we may use the expression, as when she was in a good temper with her pupils, was waiting to receive him.

The interview was long and sweet.

Lord Sunderland pleaded his cause warmly and Miss Venner received his advances as he wished. He declared that he belonged to her heart and soul and asked her if she could love him in return.

"I am quite alone in the world," she replied, ignoring her relations as she always did. They were poor and would be of no use or credit to her—one, Dingwall, was in penal servitude and he certainly was best forgotten. "Mrs. Burgoyne is my only friend. I know little of you, but I am so trusting and confiding I am willing to place my future in your hands."

"Darling child," said the earl, "I desire nothing better. You will find me the kindest and most attentive of husbands. Dear, dear child, name the happy day and you will never repent your decision."

"Say this day month," she answered, softly.

He caught her in his arms and pressing her to his manly breast, kissed her tenderly.

"Thank you a thousand times!" he exclaimed.

"This happiness is more than I deserve."

When he took his leave it seemed as if they had known one another twenty years, on such friendly terms were they.

Miss Venner was again placed upon the pinnacle of her ambition, which was ever changing and before which she sacrificed everything.

The Earl of Sunderland congratulated himself upon having gained the heart of a woman he really loved, though he was so often in love that he could scarcely be expected to know his own mind; but, what was of more importance, he had every reason to believe that his fiancée was possessed of a fortune which would pay his debts and place him among the rich peers of the realm and enable him to support his title properly.

As for Miss Venner, her thoughts, after the first delirium of her triumph had passed, were turned in the direction of the Lone Tower.

She had to disembarass herself first of her husband, Frank Burgoyne, and secondly of Agnes Waldon, the poor girl whom she had so cruelly altered.

To a woman of her disposition the task was not repugnant. It was on the contrary almost congenial. She could wipe away an enemy with as little compunction as she could put her foot upon a worm, and see a mouse torn to pieces by a cat.

As the earl walked along the street he reflected,

"The next thing to do," he said to himself, "will be to see how I can get my letters, photograph etc., from the charming and rising young actress, Miss Clarice Howard. Mrs. Burgoyne has heard of her, and if Miss Venner believes there is anything between us she may break off the match. What an idiot a man is to write letters to women, but young men I suppose always will be idiots."

In the neighbourhood of Sloane Street he was accosted by a man, who exclaimed, respectfully:

"Good-morning, my lord! I have not seen you lately."

"Eh! Swordarm," replied the earl. "I was coming to your house. You can do me a service."

"Your lordship has only to mention it and it shall be done instantly," answered the stranger.

"Walk with me as far as your house, and we will talk."

Swordarm bowed in recognition of this compliment, and they proceeded side by side.

Mr. Swordarm was a fencing-master, who had an establishment near Sloane Square. He let his first floor to Miss Clarice Howard, the actress of whom we have spoken, and as she played at the Court Theatre this domicile was handy for her. Swordarm was an excellent master of the art of fence, and thoroughly wrapped up in his art. He had a lovely wife, who found his tastes uncongenial to hers, and consequently their home was not a happy one.

Mrs. Swordarm was a great patronizer of circulating libraries, and before she married she founded her ideal upon the heroes she met with in books. Swordarm did not realize her ideal, far from it.

He was bluff, curt, unread, and could not sympathize with her in any respect. So that she lamented her mistaken lot night and day, until she saw Lord Sunderlan, who was a pupil of her husband's.

His lordship had the audacity to make love, not only to the actress who had lodgings in her house but to Mrs. Swordarm herself, but it was only to Clarice Howard that he had written impassioned letters.

It was part of his creed that to write to a married woman was not only dangerous but unnecessary. More could be done by an interview than by a ream of paper covered with love passages, for, as a rule, wives are not so impressionable and easily captivated by high-flown language as maidens who do not know the world.

It will be seen that the earl was embarrassed with these love affairs, which might one or all interfere with his match with Miss Vener.

First, there was Kate Berry, the little milliner, secondly, Clarice Howard, the actress; and, thirdly, Mrs. Swordarm, wife of the fencing-master.

The earl had not gone far before Swordarm exclaimed:

"Will it suit your lordship to come to my house in a couple of hours' time? I have some lessons to give, and after that I shall be entirely at your service."

"On consideration," replied the earl, "that will do very well. I want to go to my club for letters. It is not five. At seven I will be with you—say half past, and it will give me time to dine."

Swordarm bowed. The earl hailed a hansom, and was driven to Pall Mall, alighting at his club, where he dined and arranged the plan of his campaign.

He had to get rid of these women, whom he had told he loved—two were single, one was married—and this, as he had to find out, was not such an easy task as he anticipated.

(To be continued.)

A SIXPENCE WELL INVESTED.

THE other day we saw a bright-eyed little girl, some seven or eight years of age, tripping along the streets, with a basket on her arm, apparently sent on some errand. All at once she stopped, and commenced searching for something among the snow.

'Twas evident it was something of value, and that she was in trouble. Her search was eager and anxious; the bright smile had vanished from her face, and tears were running down her cheeks. A gentleman passing at the moment noticed the tribulation of the little creature, and asked her what was the matter.

"Oh, sir," said she, her little bosom swelling, and tears choking her voice, "oh, sir, I've lost my sixpence."

The gentleman took a piece of money from his pocket, and called her to him, saying:

"Here, dear, don't cry for the lost sixpence; here is another."

And he placed it in her hand.

"Oh, dear sir," said she, as she bounded forward, "how I thank you."

Her great grief was removed, the bright smile was restored, the apprehension of a mother's frown for her carelessness was gone, and her little heart beat light again.

Think you that man, as he remembers that pretty face, beaming with gratitude and joy, will ever regret that well-invested sixpence? A whole world of happiness bought for sixpence! How easy a thing it is to shed sunshine on the hearts of those about us!

HINTS ON MATRIMONY.

No woman will be likely to dispute with us when we assert that marriage is her destiny. A man may possibly fill up some sort of an existence without loving, but a woman with nothing to love, cherish, care for, and minister to, is an anomaly in the universe, an existence without an object. It is as natural for a woman to have some one to look to for protection, some one to look to for advice and assistance, as to breathe. Without it no woman ever was or can be happy. It is the want of her nature, and nothing can satisfy her heart with such a void unfilled.

Now, with the exception of some occasional irregularities in the relative proportions of the sexes, produced by circumstances, such as the settlement of new countries, there is no reason why every man should not have a wife, and every woman a husband; and this would be brought about by the exercise of more common sense and less ambition. Each sex is looking up to something above its own sphere.

The son of an industrious and successful mechanic must be a professional man or a merchant, instead of following in his father's footsteps; and this is folly the first. When he looks for a wife the next, industrious daughter of a mechanic like his father is not good enough for him; he must make love to some fine lady who is one age in advance, that is her grand-

father was a mechanic instead, a very aristocratic distinction.

On the other hand, a girl who works for her living, earning it by her honest labours, would not deign to encourage the addresses of a labouring man; she would set her cap for a gentleman, forsooth. The mechanic's daughter educated by her father's earnings to be a fine lady encourages the attentions of a set of fops and dandies, who drive honest men away from her in disgust, and she becomes the victim of some sorry sharper or shallow idiot.

Now this is all wrong—deplorably wrong. Girls should know that men superior to themselves in education and position do not always associate with them for good. Men should know that by marrying girls educated in habits of life above their fortunes they are not likely to have good wives. A little sound sense will enable a man to see that it is better to have a wife grateful for more than she expected than grumbling at less. It is delightful going up the hill of fortune; but horrible and aggravating work to come down.

ROOM FOR THE CHILDREN.

THE bright, glad, summer time is coming,
Those sweet and sunny days,
When birds and bees, and brooks and flowers,
The joyous hours will praise;
And shall not then our merry children,
Where pride cannot annoy,
Grown grass below, blue sky above them,
The golden days enjoy?

Oh, take them not where wealth and fashion
Despoil the happy hours;
Where irksome dance and sumptuous feasting
Mar Nature's healthful powers;
Where costly robes forbid the rambles,
And blondes avoid the sun;
Where liveried servants stand in waiting
To check their romping fun.

But choose ye where some generous farmhouse
Throws wide its ample doors,
And leaves, all day, the subbeams dancing
Across its polished floors.
There they can roam at will the meadows,
Or toss the new-mown hay;
Or straying idly near the hedges
Can see the wild birds play.

Oh, let them learn where ripest berries
And brightest daisies grow;
Or let them climb the hills and mountains,
Or list the brooklet's flow.
Perchance they'll watch the sun-brown yeoman
Tilling his teeming soil,
And learn that health and peace and plenty
Can come from honest toil.

Enough have they of pomp and splendour
Within their city homes;
So grant them homely rest and quiet
When Summer's languor comes;
And gaining health and strength and beauty,
With cheeks and hearts aglow,
They'll find a zest and bliss in rambles
That age can never know.

Their youth, once past, is gone for ever,
No longer girls and boys;
So crown their days with purest pleasures,
And crowd their hours with joys!
Free as the birds in airy wildwood,
Free as the flowers that bloom,
Away, in green and pleasant places,
Room for the children, room! L. S. U.

SCIENCE.

OCEAN TELEGRAPHY.—It is expected that four cables will be working across the Atlantic and five across the Gulf of St. Lawrence before the first of September. The steamer "Hibernian" is repairing the French cable, and the "Great Eastern" and "Edinburgh" are laying that from Valentia to Heart's Content. The big ship will afterwards return to repair the broken Anglo-American cable, while the "Edinburgh" will proceed to lay two new connecting links between Hacentia, Newfoundland, and Sydney, Cape Breton. With all this it is to be hoped that these companies will see their way to a reduction of the present exorbitant tariff for messages.

WHAT IS STEEL?—The Albion Steel and Wire Company, Limited, Sheffield, have issued the following circular, with the desire to obtain the establishment, for commercial purposes, of a satisfactory definition of the difference between steel, cast iron, and wrought iron. What is steel? The question

is frequently asked; and, as we fail to find a clear full, and correct definition in any book, we will give one—hoping that any one who thinks it erroneous will make public the reason therefor. Steel: A combination or alloy of iron, that will forge, harden, and temper. There are various kinds of steel, such as carbon cast steel, tungsten cast steel, chrome cast steel, cyanogen cast steel, and titanium cast steel, and several other metals have been alloyed with iron to make steel. There is also blistered steel, which is made from malleable bar iron by a process called cementation; German steel, which is made directly from the ore, and sometimes from pig iron, in the Catalan forge; and steel which is made by other processes. The line between cast iron and steel is: when it is capable of being forged it is steel, and when it will not forge it is cast iron. And the line between malleable iron and steel is: when it will harden and temper it is steel, and when it will not harden and temper it is malleable iron. Cast steel will harden slightly when it contains from 0.25 per cent. to 0.30 per cent. of carbon, and ceases to be capable of forging if it contains much more than 1.75 per cent. of carbon.

MANUFACTURE OF WHITING AND PARIS WHITE.—The chalk is first passed through huge grinding mills, which are constantly running, breaking up the chalk and mixing it with water, which is constantly flowing in as the chalk mixture flows on. On leaving the mills the mixture passes along a series of wooden troughs, where the sand, which has a greater specific gravity than the chalk, is deposited, the chalk passing on into the settling pits. On being taken from the pits the whiting is partially dried on a flooring under which hot flues run. It is then cut up into large rough lumps, and placed in racks on trucks which run round on tramways into an immense oven. The heat from the flues in this oven is greatly increased by an air blast, which also carries off the moist exhalations from the drying whiting. Twelve hours on the heated floor and twelve hours in the oven thoroughly dries the whiting, and it is ready for packing or the putty factory. The old process of drying, first for twenty-four hours on chalk stones and then for thirty-six hours on open racks was not only more tedious but, from the variations of the temperature, was bad for the whiting for some purposes. Paris white, of a fine quality, is used for paper-hangings, adulterating paints, making paper heavier and whiter, etc. For this purpose what is called cliff stone, a better and harder quality of chalk, is used. Paris white is made much on the same principle as whiting, only being more carefully washed and more slowly dried.

SINGULAR EXPERIMENTS WITH ICE.—"Les Glaciers et les Transformations de l'Eau," par J. Tyndall, is the title of a French translation of Professor Tyndall's recent work, but the French edition has the advantage of being accompanied by an appendix containing the discussion between M. Helmholtz, late professor at Heidelberg, and the author of the book, on the curious phenomena of "regelation." The facts are these: If two lumps of ice be pressed together they will be welded at their points of contact. Mr. Faraday having communicated this observation of his to Mr. Tyndall, the latter took a hollow steel cylinder, put in some snow, which he compressed with a piston fitting tight, and thus obtained a cylinder of transparent ice. In the same way two pieces of solid ice, if subjected to pressure in a mould of any shape, will come out in that precise form. Professor William Thomson explains this by saying that by pressure the points in contact are liquified, that the water thus produced has rendered latent a portion of the caloric of the surrounding ice, whereby the temperature falls below zero, and that consequently as soon as the pressure ceases this water freezes again. Both M. Helmholtz and Professor Tyndall accept this explanation; only the latter finds it so far insufficient that it does not take into account the air contained in the water. He also describes the following experiment of his. Having put a lump of ice into hot water, he submerged it by pressing it down with another piece of ice. Notwithstanding the all but infinitesimal pressure exercised, the two lumps instantly froze together. Again, it is well known that two floating bodies wetted with water will attract each other. Now, if they be two lumps of ice swimming on hot water, they will join and coalesce at once. When the bridge thus formed has melted away they will again separate, then meet and freeze together again, and so on as long as there is any ice left. He concludes with mentioning an experiment made by M. Duppa, the upshot of which is that ice may be pressed into any shape—that of a statuette, for instance; a plaster cast may then be taken of it; and when the ice has melted away inside there remains a hollow mould, into which any metal may be poured. Professor Helmholtz replies that the non-conducting property of ice is an objection to the supposition that the caloric set at liberty by pressure can spread into the ice, and that great obscurity still prevails on the question.



[EDITH'S NEW HOME.]

EDITH LYLE'S SECRET.

By the Author of "Daisy Thornton," &c., &c.

CHAPTER VI.

The leaves of memory seemed to make
A mournful rustling in the dark. *Longfellow.*

THE shock of finding her baby gone, together with the removal from Dorset Street in her weak state, brought on another faint; and when the carriage stopped before the house in the vicinity of Belgrave Square Edith lay unconscious in the arms of her mother, who carried her up the steps and into the large, airy room, where for a time they were to stay until she had decided upon her future course and her daughter's health was restored. In a few weeks at most they should move again, Mrs. Fordham thought, but in this she was mistaken. Edith did not rally; the fainting fit was succeeded by a fever, which ran for weeks, and fastening on her brain made her sometimes like a maniac, whom only a strong man could hold.

"Baby, my baby," was her theme. "Somebody has stolen my baby, and I want her so much," she would say to those about her, and then again in a more quiet mood she would talk to the little one, and assure it that she was coming for it soon, very soon, and bidding it not to cry.

Some explanation was of course necessary to those who were with Mrs. Fordham, and she made it and said her daughter was a widow, and had recently lost her little child, and since that time had laboured under the idea that somebody had stolen it.

This seemed natural enough, and no suspicions were awakened against the highly respectable looking woman and the fair young girl who never so much as walked across the floor until the hedge-roses were in blossom and the breath of early summer was stealing in at her window.

"Now, mother," she said one morning, when for the first time for months she was dressed and sitting up, "you must go for baby; to-day—at once, will you—or shall I send some one else?"

She spoke decidedly, and Mrs. Fordham, who for weeks had felt that there was a change in her daughter, and that henceforth their relations to each other must be different from what they had hitherto been, did not oppose her, but answered, readily:

"I will go myself," and an hour or two later she stood again at the door of the foundling hospital, and rang the bell, waiting this time until her ring was answered. She was a clergyman's widow, she said, and had come to make some inquiries concerning a child named Heloise, which was left there some

time in January. Could they tell her anything about it?

They could tell her, and they did, and with a quick throbbing of the heart and a relieved expression on her face she started for home where Edith was waiting for her.

"Where is it, mother?" was the question, asked eagerly.

"Edith, baby is dead. It only lived three weeks, they told me. It was born, it seems, with some affection of the heart, which under any circumstances would have ended its life in a short time, the physician said. It had every possible care, and died with little or no pain. I was particular to inquire about that, as I knew you would wish to know. There, there, my child, don't take it so hard," and Mrs. Fordham laid her hand on the bowed head of the sorrowing girl, who was weeping passionately. "It was wrong in me perhaps to take it from you, and I am sorry now I did it. I thought then it was for the best, for a baby would be terribly in our way. Forgive me, Edith, and let us bury the past for ever."

She stooped to kiss her daughter, in whose mind there was no shadow of doubt that what her mother had told her was true. Her baby was dead, and though she mourned for it truly she knew that it was far better off in Heaven than in that dreadful hospital, with only strangers to care for it, and gradually as the days went by, and she felt her strength and health coming back again, the sense of loss and pain which at first had weighed so heavily upon her began to give way, and more than one of the lodgers in the house noticed and commented upon the great beauty of the young girl, whom they sometimes met upon the stairs or saw sitting by her window.

They knew the grave woman dressed in woman's weeds was Mrs. Fordham, and as the young girl was her daughter they naturally supposed her to be Miss Fordham, a mistake which her mother took no pains to rectify, while Edith, who had suffered so much, began to feel an utter inability to oppose her own will to that of her mother, and when the latter said to her, "Only those who helped me nurse you during your illness know that you have been married, and it is not necessary for you to explain to others that your name is not Fordham," she passively acquiesced, and thus none of the lodgers ever heard the name of Lyle or dreamed of that grave at Schuyler Hill, or the dreary room in Dorset Street and the scenes enacted there. All these were buried in the past, and there was nothing in the way of Mrs. Fordham's plans, except indeed the means to carry them out. Edith must be educated at any cost or sacrifice.

Once the mother had hoped much from her

daughter's voice, which was a fine contralto, of great power and compass. But that hope was vain; for on the dreadful day when, with the fury of a tigress, Edith had invoked Heaven's curse upon her mother if so much as a hair of baby's head was harmed, it seemed as if a hand of iron had clutched her throat with a remorseless grasp, which had for a time deprived her of her powers of utterance, except in a hoarse whisper. At intervals, even now, she felt the grip of those fingers, and would start suddenly with a sense of suffocation, which, however, soon passed away, and left her breathing free as ever it was. But the glorious voice did not come back, and, though she sometimes sang some sweet, low song, her voice was very weak, and a musical education, so far as singing was concerned, was, of course, out of the question. But for all other branches the best of teachers were procured, and Edith, who possessed a fondness for books, and was already a tolerably good scholar, progressed so rapidly as to astonish even herself, while her mother would have been perfectly content but for one little annoyance which haunted her continually, and which increased with every succeeding day. Her finances were fearfully low, nor did she know where aid was to come from.

Since leaving Dorset Street she had assumed a position and mode of life above her means, and she was seriously considering the propriety of taking lodgers herself instead of being lodged, when fortune sent in her way a kind, simple-hearted old man, with less of brains than money, as was proved by his offering himself to Mrs. Fordham, whose comely face and dignified bearing attracted his fancy, and who accepted him at once and became Mrs. Dr. Barrett, with a pleasant home in a quiet part of London, and money enough to supply every comfort of life, as well as some of its luxuries.

Though married three times, Dr. Barrett had never had a child, and his kind, fatherly heart went out at once to Edith, whom he loved and treated as a daughter, and who spent under his roof the happiest, most peaceful years of her life.

As it is not my intention to narrate in detail the incidents of these years, during which Edith was first a pupil, then a governess, and then an organist, I shall pass over them silently, and take my readers with me to a time when, in her full maturity of glorious beauty and of grace, such as few women have ever possessed, she stood just on the verge of the brilliant life her mother had so desired for her, and which proved to be so different from anything of which that wily, scheming woman had dreamed.

Dr. Barrett was dead; and as with his life the income ceased which had made Mrs. Fordham so com-

Fortable she was again reduced to the necessity of earning her daily bread, which she did by doing plain sewing, and letting two or three rooms of the little cottage which was all her husband had left her.

Edith was not with her. For two years or more she had been the companion of a Mrs. Sinclair, a wealthy invalid, who had advertized for some young person who was a good reader and did not object to invalids. The salary offered was not large, but as there was a prospect of permanency Edith had answered the advertisement in person and been preferred to scores of others, who came seeking for the place.

For six months and more Mrs. Sinclair had been abroad, but she was now in her pleasant home, a few miles from London, and on the summer morning of which I write she lay on the couch in a cozy sitting-room, which opened upon the terrace, where, on a rustic bench beneath the shadow of a maple tree, a young girl was sitting, her soft white hands holding idly the book she was not reading, and her eyes looking far away, as if in quest of something never found.

That was Edith, whom one would hardly recognize now, so entirely changed was she in style and manner and appearance. The bright colour which had once been so noticeable was gone, and her complexion was clear and white and smooth almost as marble, save when some sudden emotion called up a faint colour to her cheek.

The gray eyes, too, were darker now, and when kindling with excitement, seemed sometimes almost black with the long, curling lashes which shaded them. There was also a darker shade on the beautiful golden brown hair, which was coiled in heavy braids around her well-shaped head, and added somewhat to her apparent height.

Perfect in form and face, graceful in manner, always self-possessed and ready, with the right word in the right place, Edith Lyle was a favourite wherever she went, and during the two years she had been with Mrs. Sinclair that lady had learned to love her as a sister, and treated her with all the consideration of a friend and equal.

And Edith was very happy, save when a thought of the past came over her, and then there would steal into her beautiful eyes a look of pain, and the muscles about her mouth would contract as if forcing back words she longed to utter, but dared not.

Her marriage was a secret to every one save her mother.

Even Dr. Barrett had known nothing of it until just before he died.

Many times Edith had resolved to tell him, for it hurt her that he, who loved her so much and treated her so kindly, should be deceived; but here again her mother's strong will had its way, and Edith kept silent until a few days before the doctor died, when she told him her whole story, and begged him not to hate her because it was not earlier told.

The doctor was surprised, but not angry, and, laying his hand fondly on the young girl's head, he said:

"Poor child, you have suffered a great deal, and I pity you so much; but I am not angry—no, no, I suppose your mother is right. She generally is. She's a most wonderful woman for business. You'll get on better as a girl than you would as a widow—that is, you'll be saved a great deal of idle, curious questioning, and make a better match by-and-by. With that face and that manner of yours, you ought to marry a title; as Widow Lyle you could not. Had the child lived it would be different; now it is dead, you had better let matters remain as they are. It will please your mother so, and be quite as well for you."

This was the doctor's advice, which lifted a heavy load from Edith's mind.

Perhaps it was better to keep silent with regard to her marriage, she thought, especially as no one could be harmed by it, and gradually, as time passed on, she came to think of the past as a horrible dream from which she had awakened to find the horror gone, and the sunlight of content, if not of happiness, still shining around her.

When she went to Mrs. Sinclair she went as Edith Lyle, and when that lady on hearing her mother mentioned as Mrs. Barrett asked how that was Edith merely replied:

"Mother has been married twice. Dr. Barrett was my stepfather."

Thus Mrs. Sinclair had no suspicion of the truth, and soon learned to regard Miss Lyle as more than a mere hired companion, and was never long away when away from her.

On the day of which I write they had returned the previous night after an absence of several months, and attracted by the freshness of the morning, and the beauty of the grounds, Edith had left Mrs. Sinclair to read the pile of letters she found awaiting

her, and stole out to her favourite seat beneath the maples, where, through an opening in the distant trees of the park, she could catch glimpses of the Thames and the great city with its forest of spires and domes.

And as she sat there in her tasteful cambric wrapper, with only a bit of blue ribbon at her throat and in her hair, no one who saw her would have dreamed of that tragedy of by-gone years in which she had been so greatly interested and of which she was thinking that June morning so like that day at Schuyler Hill when the brightness of her life had so suddenly been stricken out.

Would she ever go there again—ever see that grave which Ettie had promised to keep against her coming?

Yes, she would, she said. She would go alone some time and lay her face upon the grass which covered her lost love, and tell him of the child that died and whose grave she never saw.

"But I will see it before I go," she said; "I will find where they laid my little one, and it may be—"

She did not finish the sentence, for just then the silvery stroke of a bell reached her ear and she knew she was wanted within.

She found Mrs. Sinclair sitting by a table with many letters lying open before her, and one in her hand which she had evidently just read, and which seemed to disturb her.

"I am sorry to call you when I know how fresh and bright it is out doors," she said, as Edith came to her side, "but I find here a letter, written weeks ago, which must be answered at once. It is from my brother—"

"Your brother?" Edith repeated, in some surprise, for that was the first allusion she had ever heard Mrs. Sinclair make to any near relatives.

"Yes, my half-brother Howard," was the reply. "I've never spoken of him because—because—well, there was a kind of coldness between us on account of his wife, whom I did not like. He brought her here when they were first married, and such airs as she gave herself! Had she been a duchess, she could not have borne herself more loftily than she did. I did not think her manners in good taste, and told my brother so; and as he was in the heyday of his boyhood and saw nothing amiss in his Emily, we had a little tiff and parted coldly, and I have not seen him since. Regularly, at the birth of his children he has written to me, and just before you came he wrote to say that Emily was dead. I answered, of course, and said I was sorry for him, and that I should be glad to see him and his children. There are three of them, and the eldest, a boy, bears my maiden and married name, Godfrey Sinclair Schuyler."

"Schuyler?" Edith said, and if possible her always white face was a shade paler than its wont at the sound of that name.

But Mrs. Sinclair was intent on her letter, and did not look at her as she replied:

"Yes, my brother is Howard Schuyler; his father married my mother, Mrs. Godfrey, when I was seven years old. He has a beautiful place, I am told, which they call Schuyler Hill."

"And you have news from him?" Edith said, her heart beating rapidly at the lady's reply.

"Yes, he is coming here, or he was. He is in Scotland, it seems, and wrote to know if I would be ready to receive him and his son Godfrey about this time—let me see, the 15th of June, he said, and this is the 14th. I was to answer at once, and direct to Edinburgh, where he would wait my reply. His letter was written ten days ago, and I am so much afraid he has become impatient at not hearing from me that he will perhaps go direct to the continent without stopping here at all. My head feels so bad, would you mind writing a few lines for me, just to say that I am at home, and shall be so glad to see him?"

"Certainly not," Edith answered, in a voice which did not in the least betray the storm of feeling she experienced at being thus unexpectedly brought face to face, as it were, with a past she had almost outlived.

To stay there in that room with Mrs. Sinclair while she wrote to Mr. Schuyler was impossible, and asking permission to withdraw, she went to her own chamber to be alone while she penned a letter, which by some flash of revelation or some one of those subtle emotions or presentiments all have at some time experienced, and which none can explain, she felt would influence her whole future life.

She could not understand it, nor did she attempt to seek a reason for it, but she felt certain that Mr. Schuyler was the arbiter of her fate, and that with his coming would begin a new era for her, and her hand trembled so at first that she could scarcely hold the pen, and much less write a word.

At last she commenced:

"Oakwood, June 14th, 18— Mr. Schuyler."

And there she stopped, overpowered by the memories which the sight of that name had evoked.

Once more she stood with her lover at the garden gate, and saw the night fog creeping across the river and heard in the distance the faint rumble of the fast-coming train which had thundered by just as she gave her boy husband the last good-bye kiss, and fastened in his button-hole the rose where now was the blood-red stain, and which she had still carefully preserved, while against her heart was a little silken curl cut from baby's head during the first days of her maternity.

How every little thing connected with that curl and rose came back to her now, and for an instant she felt faint again just as she had felt when they brought the dead man in and carried him out again. In her desolation she had said:

"I hate the Schuylers," and although that was years ago she almost hated them now, even though she knew them innocent of any wrong to her.

Mr. Schuyler she remembered as a tall, fine-looking man, and she had him in her mind just as he was when he stood in the garden path and glanced wonderingly up at her as she called out the name and age and birth-place of the poor youth whose memory he wished to honour.

That was the only time he had ever seen her, and she had no fear that he would recognize her now. So it was not this which made her tremble as she again took up her pen to bid him come to Oakwood, his sister's country seat. It was a shrinking from her she did not know what, and after the letter was written and approved by Mrs. Sinclair she felt tempted to tear it up instead of giving it to the servant whose duty it was to post it. But this she dared not do, and the letter was sent on its way, and as soon as it was possible to receive an answer one came to Mrs. Sinclair, who read aloud at the breakfast table:

"DEAR SISTER HELEN.—Yours of the 14th received and contents noted. Shall probably be with you the day after you get this. Godfrey will accompany me. Truly, your brother, HOWARD."

"That is so like Howard," Mrs. Sinclair said. "Short and crisp, and right to the point. One would almost think he had no heart, and yet I know he has, though he is very peculiar in some things, very reserved, and very proud, and a great stickler for justice and honour. Why, I do not suppose he would say or act a thing he did not mean even to save his life or that of his best friend."

"Yes," Edith said, idly toying with her spoon and feeling a still greater dread of this man of honour, who would not act a falsehood to save his life. "Yes. How old is he?"

"How old? Let me see. I was past eight when he was born, and I am forty-nine; that makes him almost forty-one—quite a young man, still, and fine-looking too. I dare say he will marry again."

And, glancing across the table at the beautiful lady sitting there, a curious thought sprang into Mrs. Sinclair's mind, which, however, had no echo in Edith's heart.

She had asked Mr. Schuyler's age, more for the sake of saying something than from any curiosity, and she hardly heard Mrs. Sinclair's reply, so little did she care.

His age or personal appearance was nothing to her. It was his presence in the house she dreaded, because it would awaken so many unpleasant memories and take her back to a time she had almost forgotten in the pain which had come to her during the later years.

But he was coming to-morrow, and as Mrs. Sinclair's request she herself saw that his room and Godfrey's were made ready for the travellers, and then at another request from her mistress she practised her best instrumental pieces, for "Howard used to be fond of music, and was sure to like Miss Lyle's playing."

"Try that little Scotch ballad, please. I thought your voice stronger than when you sang it to me last. Strange that it should have left you so suddenly! What was the cause of it, did you say?" Mrs. Sinclair asked.

"A sudden shock to my nerves when I was ill," was Edith's reply.

And she felt again the iron fingers on her throat, and that choking sensation as if her heart were leaping from her mouth.

Mrs. Sinclair was very fond of music, especially of singing, and, knowing this, Edith had frequently sung to her some simple ballads which were written as long as to come within the compass of her weak voice, but she could not do it now, and, excusing herself, she rose from the piano, saying she had a headache, and needed a little fresh air.

"I have not seen mother since my return. She was out the day I called, and if you are willing I would like to go into town this morning; the ride will do me good."

Mrs. Sinclair was willing, and accordingly an hour later a handsome carriage stopped before Mrs. Dr. Barrett's gate, and Edith went slowly up the walk toward the open door.

CHAPTER VII.

Let upstarts exercise uncomely roughness;
Clear spirits to the humble will be humble.

THE world had not gone very well with Mrs. Dr. Barrett since her husband's death.

Her house was too small to admit of many lodgers, and those who came did not stop long, and required so much of her that she was glad when they left, hoping to do better the next time.

A pain under her left shoulder made it hard for her to sew, and but for Edith's generosity she would have been badly off.

Edith was very kind to her, and gave her the larger part of her rather small salary, and Mrs. Barrett was very proud of her beautiful daughter, even though that daughter had sorely disappointed her in not having married or shown any disposition to do so, nor, so far as Mrs. Barrett knew, had she received but one offer, and that from so questionable a quarter that a refusal was the only course to be taken.

She had, however, hoped great things from the tour abroad, for she knew there were several gentlemen in Mrs. Sinclair's party, and she was waiting rather impatiently for the result.

She had been away from home when Edith called upon her the day following her return, but she found the card, "Edith Lyle"—Edith never put Miss before her name—and when her maid glowingly described the carriage and the beautiful young lady who came in it she said, with a great deal of pride: "That was my daughter."

"And sure she walked as if the ground wasn't good enough for her to step on," was Kitty's mental comment, as she wondered at the difference between mother and child.

After that day Mrs. Barrett was constantly expecting Edith, and once she thought of going to Oakwood to see her, but on the occasion of her first and only visit there Mrs. Sinclair, whose likes and dislikes were very strong, had conceived a great aversion for her, and had intimated to Edith that though she was at liberty to visit her mother when she pleased it was not desirable that the latter should come often to Oakwood.

Knowing this Mrs. Barrett did not like to venture, and so she remained at home, waiting impatiently for Edith until the morning when she saw at last the well-known carriage at the gate, and Edith coming up the walk.

How beautiful she was, and how like a princess she looked even in her simple muslin dress and straw hat, with a lace scarf around her graceful shoulders. Everything which Edith wore became her well, and now with a faint flush on her cheeks and a sparkle in her eyes, she had never seemed fairer to the proud mother than when she swept into the house with a grace and dignity peculiarly her own and put up her lips to be kissed.

Mrs. Barrett was glad to see her, and asked her many questions concerning her journey, and admired her dress, and scarf, and boots, and gloves, and asked what they cost, and told about herself, how she had but one lodger now, and that he found fault with everything, and that the day before she had received application for rooms from a respectable-looking woman, who seemed to belong to the middle or lower class.

"Judged she said she had been out to service before her marriage, but that her husband had left her some bank stock, so that she was quite comfortable now."

"I never thought I would take any one who was not first class," Mrs. Barrett said, "but my purse is so low that I should have made an exception in favour of this Mrs. Rogers if she had not told me her cousin was waiting maid at Oakwood."

"Oh, that is, Norah Long," Edith said, indifferently, and her mother continued:

"Somehow it seemed like coming down to lodge and serve a cousin of Mrs. Sinclair's maid, and when she said she had a little girl about eleven years old, I think, and that she wished her to have a room by herself—a pretty room too—and she preferred the one you used to occupy, I made that an excuse for refusing her. I could not give up my best room to a child, I said, and I did not care to take children away."

"I think you were very foolish, mother; if this Mrs. Rogers would pay well, and is respectable, why not take her as soon as another? The child is certainly no objection, and it might be pleasant to have it in the house."

"Perhaps so, but I did not like the woman's manner. When she asked for the little room I told her it belonged to my daughter, Miss Lyle, who was

travelling with Mrs. Sinclair, of Oakwood. 'Oh, Miss Lyle,' she said, 'I have heard my cousin speak of her. She is very beautiful, I believe.' I thought her impertinent, and answered, 'People call her so. Can I do anything more for you?' Even then she did not go, but offered me a shilling more than my price for the rooms. Indeed, she seemed resolved to have them, and only a positive refusal on the ground of not liking to have the child availed to send her away. I never thought I should be reduced so low that the cousin of a servant would insist upon lodging with me," and Mrs. Barrett began to break down a little; then, rousing herself, she said, suddenly, "Edith, will you never marry and raise me out of this? Did you find no one abroad?"

"No one, mother," and Edith flushed to her forehead, while her voice had in it a tone of irritation, and she continued: "How many times must I tell you that I do not go about the country trying to sell myself? I am willing to work for you as long as I have strength, but marry I never shall, and probably could not if I would."

"You, with that face, say you could not marry!" Mrs. Barrett exclaimed.

"The man who would take me for my face alone I do not want," Edith rejoined, "and the man whom I could respect enough to marry must know all my past, and, after knowing it, how many, think you, would care to have me?"

There was a gesture of impatience on the part of Mrs. Barrett, but, before she could speak, Edith continued:

"Mr. Schuyler, of Schuyler Hill, is expected at Oakwood to-morrow."

"Mr. Schuyler!" and Mrs. Barrett was surprised. "How does he happen to come to Oakwood?"

"He is Mrs. Sinclair's half-brother. I never knew until the other day that his wife is dead, and he is travelling with Godfrey."

"Oh, Mrs. Schuyler dead! She was a sweet-mannered lady, and young too. Why, Mr. Schuyler cannot be very old. Not much past forty, I am sure, and he was very fine-looking, Edith."

But Edith had risen to go, and, if she heard, she did not in the least understand what was in her mother's mind; and, buttoning her long gloves, she said:

"While Mr. Schuyler is there Mrs. Sinclair's time will be occupied with him, and she will not have so much need of me. I will try to see you oftener. I wish I could take you out of this altogether, mother, for I know how distasteful the life is to you after having known one so much better; but my salary is not large, and Mrs. Sinclair will never raise it. It is a principle of hers to give so much and no more. If she were not so kind I would try for another situation."

"No, no," the mother said, in some alarm, "don't leave Oakwood on my account. I've always felt that something would come of your being there. I can do very well as I am, only it was humiliating to have that Mrs. Rogers, who had been in service, come to me for rooms, and act as if she were my equal."

"I do not see it in that light, mother," Edith said. "If Mrs. Rogers is respectable, and can pay, I advise you to take her. It is far better to have some one permanently than the changing, floating class you usually have about you. Beside that, it must be pleasant to have a decent woman in the house than men of whom you know nothing. Suppose I speak to Norah, and tell her you will take her cousin if she has not secured apartments elsewhere; and if she wants my old room for her child let her have it. I do not occupy it often, and would rather some nice little girl was in it than any one else. Yes, I think I'll speak to Norah."

And without waiting for her mother to object, even if she had wished to do so, Edith went hastily down the walk to the carriage waiting for her.

She found Mrs. Sinclair asleep, and Norah mending a lace handkerchief for her outside the door.

"Norah," she said, "has your cousin, Mrs. Rogers, yet suited herself with lodgings?"

"No, ma'am. She was just here. You must have met her and the little girl somewhere in the park. You would have noticed the child."

But Edith had been too much occupied with her own thoughts as she drove through the park to see the two—a woman and a child sitting on a bench beneath the trees, and looking curiously at her as she drove by.

"No, I met no one," she said; "but I wish you would see your cousin, and tell her that Mrs. Barrett will accommodate her with rooms."

"Two rooms?" Norah asked.

"Yes, two rooms, if she likes," Edith replied, "if she pay in advance."

"She's sure to do that," Norah answered, quickly; "and she's a bit too. Her husband left her well beforehand, and the child has something too. That's

what makes Mary—my cousin, please—so careful of her. She isn't her own, you see; she's adopted, and has a little money, and Mary worships her as something different from common ones; and well she may, for a sweeter, prettier lass was never born in England than little Gerrie Westbrooke."

There was a sound in Mrs. Sinclair's room, and Edith hastened to remove her hat and scarf so as to be in readiness for the lady when she was needed, and what Norah had said to her of her cousin and the child was scarcely heeded, except indeed the name, Gerrie Westbrooke, which struck her as very pretty, and twice that day she caught herself repeating it, while in her dreams that night it seemed constantly in her mind; and when at an early hour she woke from a troubled sleep her chamber was full of the faint echoes of the name of the little girl who was to occupy her old room and bed—Gerrie Westbrooke.

It was the day after Edith's visit to her mother, and, taking advantage of the hour when Mrs. Sinclair took her after-lunch nap, she went out with her book into the grounds, and strolled on until she came to a clump of trees at the farthest extremity of the park, where was a little rustic chair.

This had always been her favourite resort, the place she sought when she wished to be alone; and here she sat down, ostensibly to read, but really to think—not so much of the past as of the future. That her kind, indulgent mistress, who had been an invalid for so many years, and whom many pronounced only nervous and fidgety, was failing fast was very apparent to her experienced eyes, and only that morning she had observed that the handkerchief Mrs. Sinclair held to her lips after a paroxysm of coughing had a faint colouring of blood upon it.

"And where shall I find a home like this when she is gone?" Edith asked herself, sadly. "I might go back to mother and help her with her sewing, and take Kitty's place," she said, shuddering a little as she thought of the small house, so different from the pleasant home which had been hers for more than two years.

She might go out as a governess again, but whom she remembered the insult which she had twice received when a governess, once from the young man of the house, who looked upon her as lawful prey, and once from the master, a brutal man who could not withstand her beauty, she thought any life preferable to that. Her face and manner were both against her, and if Mrs. Sinclair died her only safety was in her mother's house.

"Yes, that will be the end of it," she said, a little bitterly, as she remembered all her mother had hoped for her and what she had once hoped for herself.

So much was she absorbed in these reflections, that she did not at first see the two gentlemen who had entered the park by a side gate, not far distant, and were walking slowly up the path which led directly past the chair in which she was sitting. Two young gentlemen she thought them, for one at least was very young, with a supple, springy grace in every movement, while the other, whose step was quite as rapid, though it had more dignity and character in it, could not be old, or even middle-aged, with that fine, erect form, that heavy, silken beard, and wealth of dark brown hair.

That it could be Mr. Schuyler and his son she never dreamed, for, though Mrs. Sinclair had said her brother was not yet forty-two, Edith, who, like most young people, held forty as an age bordering on antiquarianism, thought of him always as a gray-haired man, with a stoop perhaps, and a slow tread, and not at all like this man coming so swiftly toward her and pointing out something in the park to his companion. He had evidently been at Oakwood before, for she heard him say:

"We ought to see the house from this point. This must be a new path since I was here, and yet I remember that little foot-bridge. Your mother and I used often to come down to it; she liked to see the water falling over the white stones. That was nineteen years ago."

"Hush-sh, father! look, there's a young lady sitting in the shadow of those trees," came warningly from the young man, or boy, and then with a great heart throb Edith knew who the strangers were and arose to her feet.

They were quite up to her now, and both removed their hats and stood with heads uncovered, while the older said to her:

"I beg your pardon, miss, but will this path take us direct to the house at Oakwood? I was here, many years ago and ought to know the way, but it seems a little strange to me."

His voice was very pleasant and his manner, deferential as he stood looking at her, while with a deep flush upon her usually white cheeks Edith replied, that the path did lead direct to the house, which could be seen as soon as he reached the slight declivity yonder. Then, with eyes cast down she stood

waiting for him to pass on, she thinking of that one time when she had spoken to him from the window of the cottage, and he thinking of the marvellous beauty of her face, and wondering who she could be.

"Some guest at Oakwood, undoubtedly," he thought, and then he put another question to her and said, "Do you know if Mrs. Sinclair is at home this morning? I am her brother, Mr. Schuyler, and this my son Godfrey."

With a bow to both gentlemen Edith replied:

"Mrs. Sinclair is at home, and is expecting you. I am Edith Lyle, Mrs. Sinclair's companion."

She said this proudly and with a purpose not to deceive the gentlemen with regard to her position longer than was necessary. She had so often been spoken to by strangers in just the respectful, deferential tone with which Mr. Schuyler had addressed her, and then had seen the look of unmistakable interest give place to one of surprise and indifference when her real position was known, that she was neither astonished nor disappointed when she saw the peculiar look she knew so well steal over the grave, proud face of Mr. Schuyler, who bowed swiftly as he said:

"Oh, yes. I knew she had some young person staying with her. Thanks for your directions. We shall find our way now very well. Come, Godfrey."

But Godfrey was in no particular haste to go on. A beautiful girl was attractive to him under all circumstances, whether the daughter of an earl or the paid companion of his aunt, and his manner had not changed one whit when Edith announced herself as his inferior according to the creed of the beau monde.

"Come, my son," Mr. Schuyler said again, and then Godfrey passed on with a look at Edith plainly said: "I'd much rather stay with you, but you see it's impossible."

It was the old, old story—contempt from the older ones and impertinence from the younger so soon as she was known to be a dependent, Edith thought, and a few hot, resentful tears trickled through the white fingers she pressed to her eyes as the two men walked away and were lost to view over the little hill.

And yet for once she was mistaken. Mr. Schuyler had felt no contempt for her; he never felt that for any woman, and the change in his manner, when he found who she was, was involuntary, and owing wholly to his early training, which had built a barrier between himself and those who earned their daily bread.

He had taken Edith for the possible young lady of some noble house, and was disappointed to find her only the companion of his sister, but a lady still, judging from her manners and speech, while Godfrey, though an intolerable tease, would sooner have parted with his right hand than have been rude to any woman.

A dress, whether it hung in slatternly folds around a washerwoman, or adorned the daughter of a duchess, was sacred in his eyes, and though in a certain way he had all the pride of the Schuylers and the Rossiters combined it was a pride which prompted him to treat every one kindly.

His mother, who had been very fond of him, had done her best to make him understand that as a Rossiter and Schuyler it behoved him to demean himself like one worthy of so illustrious a line of ancestry, but Godfrey did not care for ancestry, nor blood, nor social distinctions, and played with every ragged boy, and sat for hours with old Peterkin, the cobbler, and kept little Johnnie Mack at Schuyler Hill all day when his mother was out working, and the child would have been alone but for this thoughtfulness.

(To be continued.)

FLOWERS.—Who would wish to live without flowers? Where would the poet fly for his images of beauty if they were to perish for ever? Are they not the emblems of loveliness and innocence—the living types of all that is pleasing and graceful? We compare young lips to the rose, and the white brow to the radiant lily; the winning eye gathers its glow from the violet, and a sweet voice like a breeze kissing its way through the flowers. We hang delicate blossoms on the silken ringlets of the bride, and strew her path with the fragrant bells, when she leaves the church. We place them around the marble face of the dead in the narrow coffin, and they become symbols of our affection—pleasures remembered, and hopes faded, wishes flown and scenes cherished, the more that they can never return. Still we look to the far-off spring in other valleys—to the eternal summer beyond the grave, when the flowers which have faded shall again bloom in starry fields, where no ruder winter can intrude. They came upon us in spring like the recollections of a dream, which hovered about us in sleep, peopled with shadowy beauties and purple delights, fancy brodered. Sweet flowers! that bring

before our eyes scenes of childhood—faces remembered in youth, when Love was a stranger to himself! The mossy bank by the wayside, where we so often sat for hours, drinking in the beauty of the primroses with our eyes—the sheltered glen, darkly green, filled with perfume of violets, that shone, in their intense blue, like another sky spread upon the earth—the laughter of merry voices—the sweet song of the maiden—the downcast eye, the spreading blush, the kiss, ashamed of its own sound—are all brought back to memory by a flower.

MARRIED IN MASK.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"AND when under the face of the sun am I ever going to need their assistance again? What can they ever do for me?" said the young banker.

"Listen," said this apparently aged counsellor. "Do you think that no one has an interest in the history of a woman found dead in a shanty except those who have been her confederate thieves? The public has an interest, and a deep one, in tracing out the murderer. There may also be relatives who have been watching for years for some clue to the slayer of the woman. And I say to you now that, of my own knowledge, I pronounce you to be in imminent danger of arrest for this murder by parties who have no association with Old Hawk and his gang whatever. The keen eyes of a detective, working in the interest of law and justice, have been following you for years. Circumstances have thus far wonderfully baffled these keen eyes. But they have looked upon you in the night time once, and recently. They will yet find you out again."

Sam started in surprise, and the aged Rudd leaned forward eagerly in his arm-chair and said:

"We have done wisely in summoning you to our assistance. Speak farther the language of advice."

"My advice to this young man is to keep good fellowship, but secretly, with these desperadoes still. Make them believe that you are really their confederate and friend, and they will all come to your assistance when the officers of justice seize you at last. Instead then of having interests antagonistic to your interests will be identical with your acquittal. Instead of swearing against you they will swear in your favour."

"Go on, Dr. Ruffini," said the elder Rudd. "You know all that we know and more besides. Under the new dangers with which you are acquainted it would be useless for Sam to follow my advice and go abroad. Detectives are not deterred by seas and oceans. You have known then that a detective was recently upon the track of my son?"

"I saw the man following Sam," said Dr. Ruffini, "and I followed the man. He paused when his game paused, and went on when his game went on. I followed him until his actions were beyond all question. He was a detective. I threw over his head my cloak from behind and held him to the earth until his game was out of sight. Then he assured me that the young man was suspected of murdering the woman called Red Eyed Mag, and that the motive for the crime was the terrible alterations and combats he had been known to have with her. Am I or am I not right in advising Sam to keep friendship with the woman's friends and associates while this detective is pushing him so patiently and so closely? Should there chance to be a speedy arrest and trial, Old Hawk and his gang will be more serviceable as friends than as enemies. Court them, young man."

Nicholas Rudd acquiesced at once with this suggestion, and promised to give his son some booty to distribute among the gang.

"Allow me to advise prompt action in the matter," said Dr. Ruffini. "We never can calculate the hour when a skilful detective will put hands upon his game. Go to these men to-night. That is my urgent advice."

His recommendations were carried out in every particular, and on the following day the young banker announced to his father at the breakfast-table that he had seen Old Hawk and several of the thieves.

The desperadoes had manifested their delight in unequivocal terms. They had grasped Sam by the hand one after another and sworn that he was a true friend, and that he could rely on them for assistance in any emergency. He had assured them that when certain negotiations had been completed his father would have in a certain vault such an accumulation of wealth as would make every one of them independent for life.

They had parted with him in high glee and prepared to indulge in a great debauch in honour of their good fortune.

While Sam was still seated at the breakfast-table a servant handed him a card and announced that a gentleman about to leave town was at the door and desired to see him but for a moment.

The young banker went at once to the street door and was accosted by a gentleman dressed in the height of fashion, who inquired if his name was Samuel Rudd. Upon his replying that that was his name the gentleman said:

"That man at the foot of the steps has a document for you which will explain the reason of my hasty call."

"Bid him come up the steps, then," said the young banker, "and then come into the house both of you."

The man in the street, at a signal from the fashionable man, mounted the steps, and declining the invitation to enter the house, opened a written document and held it out for Sam to read.

The young banker glanced over the paper and then his countenance became suddenly pale. It was a warrant for his arrest. The officer—for such he proved to be—seized the young man by the arm and said:

"Sir, you are my prisoner. Come along with me without making any trouble, for I am armed, as well as my companion here."

"On what charge do you arrest me, sir?" said Sam. "You are charged with the murder of a woman several years ago called Red Eyed Mag."

"Bring me my hat from the rack in the hall and then summon my father to the door, and I will go with you and make no resistance," said the young banker.

His wishes were complied with, and in another moment Nicholas Rudd and the frightened wife of Sam were at the street door.

"You will allow us to see the prisoner in his cell, will you not?" said the distressed young wife, when all was explained to her.

"All relatives are permitted to visit a prisoner if they are willing to submit to a search first," said the officer.

At this instant, and before Bessie could speak again, Doctor Ruffini caught her arm suddenly from behind and whispered in her ear:

"I charge you in the name of Heaven to hold your peace from this instant. If you speak one single word more now to these officers you will destroy your husband's only chance for his life."

She turned in amazement and whispered back to the aged physician the single word:

"Why?"

Doctor Ruffini whispered something in her ear which caused the blood to fly from her face. She made no response, but allowed the physician to lead her hastily back into the breakfast-room, from which she had rushed at the first intimation that Sam was in trouble.

Doctor Ruffini instantly appeared again at the street door and said to Sam, aloud:

"Don't make any comments on my action, or you will regret it. Go along with the officers without uttering a word. Go along, I tell you."

So accustomed was the young man to obey that voice, and to rely upon that friend's counsel, that he drew his hat over his eyes in his mortification, and said to the officer:

"Move on now, I am ready."

"As he passed down the steps under guard Nicholas Rudd said to him:

"Keep up your spirits, Sam; I will be with you at the prison as soon as possible, and will bring to you the ablest criminal lawyer in London."

The young man made no reply, but contented himself with simply waving his hand to his adopted father.

What Ruffini had said so emphatically to him alarmed him.

He pondered over the warning after he was seated in the carriage, which immediately drove up to take him to prison.

What could the astute Ruffini mean by preventing the farewell between husband and wife from taking place?

He had fairly dragged away Bessie from the door and sealed her lips. What harm could there be in permitting the natural manifestations of affection and parting words between two persons so devoted to each other as Sam and Bessie?

The young banker could not comprehend Ruffini's singular conduct. But so impressed was he by the doctor's last words, "Go along with the officers without uttering a word," that he fulfilled the request to the letter, and remained sullenly speechless until the arrival at the gloomy doors of the temple where criminals are confined who are charged with the dreadful crime of murder.

Not a word could the officers of the law draw from him on that gloomy carriage ride.

But when the carriage had driven away from the house Doctor Ruffini said exultantly to Nicholas Rudd, who stood in the door looking out after the receding vehicle which contained his adopted son and heir:

"Thank Heaven that neither Bessie nor Sam committed themselves in the presence of those men. I prevented it just in time. Come into the breakfast-room now, and I will explain my conduct to you."

The result of the conference which immediately ensued between Doctor Ruffini, Bessie, and Nicholas Rudd in the breakfast-room was that the confidential servant, William, was despatched to order a carriage from a livery stable to await the arrival of the trio in a neighbouring street.

William was charged to maintain secrecy regarding the departure of the three in so singular a conveyance as a livery stable carriage.

Nicholas Rudd, whose own carriage and horses were superb, an hour later stole out on foot, with his two companions, to meet a common hack around the corner. They entered it, Bessie being closely veiled that she might not be seen.

She was expected to play a part to save her husband from the gallows. Her innate tact and cunning were about to be called into action. She was very pale from agitation, but she had known what sacrifice to save Sam had been. She was prepared to make other sacrifices for him.

She had passed through many strange scenes during her eventful life. She was now about to manifest her powers as an actress, not one of the class who move and speak on the boards of a theatre, but an actress on the stage of real life. She was a banker's daughter-in-law to-day. To-morrow she would appear in an humble character. To-day silks rustled upon her. To-morrow calico would be her loftiest aspiration. She had rejected silk, and was now deliberately choosing the cheapest fabrics in which to array her exquisite person.

She proposed to save her young husband by this change. There was a possibility that she might be successful. But then again there was danger that her transition from silk to calico might not avail to effect her purpose. But Ruffini had insisted upon her making the attempt, and she was willing, nay more, eager to play her part.

The trio discussed the matter as they rode along the streets of the metropolis.

Finally the carriage came to a full stop, and, looking out of the window, Nicholas Rudd saw in a narrow hall an unpretending lawyer's sign, which indicated to passers-by that here studied, meditated and advised the ablest criminal lawyer of the great metropolis.

Sam's life was to be entrusted to the eloquent advocate's skill. The lawyer was also to be consulted as to the possibility of Bessie playing her rôle in calico.

In his inner room sat a man of forty years of age, engrossed in the study of legal papers. In his outer office sat a slender clerk of twenty-five years, dressed in black.

The clerk was writing.

No one could gain admittance to the great criminal lawyer without first consulting the confidential clerk.

The lawyer was robust and the picture of health. His weight was close upon two hundred and twenty pounds. Great muscular power was in those heavy shoulders and arms. His lower limbs were firm, full, and sinewy as those of an athlete.

They could not well be otherwise, as the man walked upon an average eight good miles every day.

He owned an estate up the river, and when he could steal away from business and from the metropolis, he put these solid, sinewy limbs to good use in pedestrianism.

At the foot of his estate flowed the river, and here lay moored his skiff.

When the legs had done duty then the arms were called upon to develop themselves at the oars.

The lawyer, like a sensible man, believed that an adequate knowledge of the laws of the realm must be founded upon a thorough acquaintance with the laws of health.

He deemed a sound physical formation necessary for the perfect development and use of a healthy brain.

If he gained distinction at the bar far beyond others of his age it was due, to a great extent, to the fact that he maintained a just proportion between the use of the body and the toil of the brain. It was this sound, healthy muscular condition of his body which enabled the brain to accomplish such clear, beautiful, and accurate results in the arena where legal intellects contend.

The lawyer was a man of fair complexion, flushed with health and warm blood. His hair was brown, and cut as close to his head as that of a convict. But this cropped condition of the Honourable Joseph Travers served only the more effectually to bring out to view the symmetrical lines of his intellectual head.

His head was set almost haughtily upon his shoulders, but he was far from being a haughty man. He

was one of the warmest-hearted men that ever breathed, open-handed, impulsive, impetuous, and impetuous even at times.

His will was immense.

Hence the facility with which he had trampled down the many obstacles to success which had lain in his path from his very boyhood up.

He had literally forced his way to the bar. Men of inferior talents were envious of him because he could by the force of his intellect and the eloquence of his tongue gain the popularity which they had to intrigue for.

Joseph Travers would fawn upon no one, but when he loved a man once no hue and cry could tear away his heart from the object of his affection or respect. He loved because he discerned. When he encountered a pure, noble, generous heart he recognized it because it was like himself. When a storm arose he knew that the hour for friendship to manifest itself had come.

No man was ever so independent of public favour, and yet whenever he went upon the platform in times of political convulsion men flocked to him and were convinced because brain and heart convinced them.

No sooner did his eloquent voice open than intellectual men recognized him as orator, reasoner, and lawyer. His speeches were reported in books as masterpieces of logic.

He ferreted out and exposed crime with marvellous accuracy, showing himself to be master of craft as well as legal lore. Then his career led him through the mazes of civil law. He was equally successful here, and his name went rapidly up before the public. His legal fees became heavy. Men could well afford to pay liberally one who seldom erred in his legal conclusions. But the more rapidly money came in to him the more liberal became his expenditures. He never turned his back upon the destitute. He gave to the blind beggar at the street corner, saying:

"I always think when I see these poor creatures how I would suffer if I became blind."

When this hard-working lawyer had completed his day's work he would look around for a friend to have a ride with him after a fast horse which he loved. Then came a generous dinner, then a long walk, when he laughed and unbosomed himself like a boy and gave vent to those sallies of wit or comments upon character which indicated the master.

This was the lawyer who had been selected by Nicholas Rudd to defend his adopted son in the criminal court. He had heard of the man as one who had combined learning with thorough tact in the management of suits. His informant had told Rudd that Joseph Travers knew how to influence a jury and reach their hearts and understandings.

He had been advised that this criminal lawyer saw with the glance of genius the real vital points in a case and knew how to concentrate attention upon them.

It was said, moreover, that he had carried juries with him despite the emphatic rulings of the judge upon the inadmissibility of the testimony.

There were peculiar hardships attending the case of the poor young man, Sam. There were principles of law which would militate against his acquittal. True, he was really innocent of the crime of murder. He had slain Red Eyed Mag when she was strangling him to death for defending the poor, helpless child from her wicked blows. But the poor boy was alone with the woman. No adult saw the conflict who would testify in his favour. Ill-will of the fiercest nature could be proved against him.

He had muttered threats before the fatal night.

But the greatest difficulty in the matter lay with the child witness, little Bessie. How to get her testimony before the jury was the enigma.

The great lawyer was to be the reliance of father, wife and friend. Could he by his skill and tact put Bessie and the jury in intelligent communication? Could he use her knowledge to acquit Sam of murder?

These questions were proposed to him in his inner office when the three visitors had gained admittance and were seated around him, the door being closed against the intruders.

The blue eyes of the robust lawyer dilated and gleamed with wonderful brilliancy as the difficult points in Sam's case became manifest to him.

He questioned Bessie carefully as to her recollection of the fearful scene. All was well so far as she was concerned.

Her words thrilled him. He saw that her eloquent account of the affair would be more potent with the jury than legal arguments upon circumstantial evidence. But could he succeed in getting her to testify as to what she knew?

Ah! there was the rub. Like a merciless tyrant stood before his legal vision a hardship of the law. A principle was involved which had been fortified by the legal wisdom and decisions of many courts for

ages. How should he flank this enemy, this monster principle, which now was casting its shadow over the life of a human being over the life of the poor boy who had struggled so hard to be a true and upright man? The victim of early evil associations was now in a cell. Could he be saved? Was it possible to cast off from him the black clouds which had swept down upon him and enveloped him in their terrible gloom?

Then Ruffini spoke and proposed that Bessie should be isolated from her home and brought forward at the trial under her original name, and as if entirely disconnected with Nicholas Rudd's family. The marriage was secret and could be kept secret by a little management with Nicholas Rudd's servants.

"The trouble is," said the lawyer, "that no one can know what part the robber gang are playing in this matter. If Old Hawk and his associates are really deceived by Sam's promises and by the booty which he has given them, they will keep close-mouthed and conceal what they know about the marriage. In that event I will work upon the jury in such a way that no judge can take them out of my net."

"In that event, that is to say if Old Hawk and his gang are true to Sam," interposed Ruffini, "it is feasible for Bessie to play her game."

"Undoubtedly," said the lawyer. "That course she must adopt. But can't some of you contrive to bring me into communication with Old Hawk? I must pump him as to the feelings and intentions of the gang regarding Sam and the murder."

"I will volunteer," said Ruffini, "to find the man and bring him to you."

"Have you no feeling of personal danger in seeking their haunts?" said the lawyer.

An exclamation of contempt escaped the doctor. Then he said:

"I have encountered worse perils than this in my life. I will hunt out Old Hawk and bring him to you."

"Command me for any amount of money to aid you with the desperado," said Nicholas Rudd. "Don't fail to buy his presence here if you can't secure it in any other way."

Shortly after this the conference broke up, and the trio re-entered the carriage and drove away.

After a long ride they reached a confectionery establishment. The carriage paused here, and Nicholas Rudd entered the shop alone.

In a few minutes he appeared at the carriage door and requested Bessie to alight; then he conducted her to the hall-door adjoining the shop.

It was immediately opened for him by a lady, who conducted the two up a narrow flight of stairs to her parlour over the shop.

When they were seated Nicholas Rudd said:

"Mrs. Frear, you told me, ten years ago, when I came to your husband's death-bed, that you hoped the time would come that you could requite me for the services I rendered him in that last illness."

"I have not forgotten, sir," she said, "that you were my husband's friend and benefactor both in health and in illness. Had you not paid off that mortgage I should probably be a beggar to-day instead of being a woman in comfortable circumstances. If the time has really come at last when I can serve you I beg that you will call upon me to fulfil my promise."

"I desire to ask a favour of you, Mrs. Frear," said Rudd.

"I will do all in my power for you," she replied.

"Then take into your employ this young woman. She desires a situation behind the counter of your shop. She will soon learn the business and you will be satisfied with her. Her name is Bessie. She is honest and upright in every particular. She has no parents. You will confer a great favour upon me by employing her."

The woman looked curiously upon the beautiful face now unveiled. It seemed to confirm Nicholas Rudd's endorsement of her integrity.

"Fortunately," said Mrs. Frear, "there is a vacancy now behind my counter. The girl who occupied the place has just left me; Bessie shall take her place. You do not make a very heavy demand upon my services, Mr. Rudd."

"I am glad," he said, "that my desire and the requirements of your business are in such happy accord. I shall leave the young woman with you now. Make a good business woman of her. She is perfectly competent for the place."

He arose to his feet, and said, upon leaving: "I hope you are satisfied with the situation, Bessie. It is the best I could find for you."

The young lady, who was now commencing her career as an actress, dropped a courtesy, and said, timidly:

"You are very kind, sir, to take so much interest in a poor orphan girl. I think I should have starved if you had not taken this trouble."

Then she commenced crying so naturally that even her father-in-law was deceived for an instant. The tears rolled down her cheeks, her lips trembled and failed to utter words which she apparently wished to speak, and then she buried her face in her handkerchief and sobbed. Nicholas Rudd uttered soothing words, and bade her keep up her spirits and try to please her employer.

It was quite an affecting scene, and Mrs. Frear was gratified to see that the girl had gratitude in her for the gentleman's interest in her behalf.

But when Bessie followed Nicholas Rudd downstairs, and out to the carriage, to bid Doctor Ruffini farewell, she whispered to her father-in-law:

"Did I do it well?—Do you think I can play the part of poor, pretty and simple?"

"Admirably!" exclaimed the banker. "You deceived even me whom few women can deceive. I thought you were really crying."

"Trust me then," she said, "to carry out the character to the end. But how am I to ascertain, from time to time, the progress of my husband's case? It will never do for any of you to come near me. Mrs. Frear will suspect something queer is going on."

"I will be the messenger between you and the lawyer," said Dr. Ruffini. "Everything that can interest you I will communicate to you in person. Look sharp then in the evening for a young gentleman who seems very fond of purchasing sugar plums. I am accustomed to disguises in my own country. During our civil commotions in Italy I had to assume many characters. I will come to you in the shop, disguised as a young gentleman. See to it that I don't beat you as an actor."

"All right," she said, and then walked slowly into the house.

The carriage drove away, and the two gentlemen seated in it congratulated themselves that their game played so auspiciously for Sam's interests.

The whole scheme had for its ultimate object the production of Bessie in court.

The lawyer had assured them that, if she could succeed in appearing as a witness without challenge from the prosecuting attorney and without exciting suspicion as to her real character, he would have a powerful lever wherewith to move the jury in Sam's behalf.

They were all working to evade the effect of a well-established principle of law. Was the astute Joseph Thorne equal to the emergency?

We shall see.

While all this plotting was going on in Sam's behalf the man who had been the real cause of his arrest, Pryor, the detective, was puzzling his brains to ascertain what had become of Bessie.

He was the man who had summoned the young banker to the front door, and given him into the custody of a deputy sheriff.

After Ruffini had so unceremoniously flung him to the pavement and thrown him off the seat, he came to the same spot day after day, hoping that this street was the last place he would see Sam in whatever guise he might choose to be engaged.

His persistency was rewarded, and he once more put eyes upon the long-sought Sam.

He followed him until he entered the mansion of the great Rudd.

It was nightfall.

The young man did not come out that night from the house.

Pryor watched the mansion then until morning.

He was disguised as a beggar, and crouched upon doorsteps opposite the house of Rudd.

He watched the dwelling until the sun arose.

He waited and kept his keen eyes upon the place hour after hour, until the time came when men of business start out for the City. Out of the grand house came Sam, and walked away.

The detective followed him, and finally saw him enter the great banking-house of Nicholas Rudd.

"Who is that young man just gone in?" he inquired of a policeman standing near.

"That is Nicholas Rudd's adopted son and partner, Samuel Rudd," was the reply of the officer, to whom Pryor had made himself known.

"Has he been long connected with this house?" he continued, utterly amazed at what had been going on so openly, when he believed that Sam had been skulking in dark and secret ways.

He was still more surprised at the policeman's second answer.

"In one capacity or another, either as watchman or clerk, he has been connected with Nicholas Rudd some ten or twelve years."

What a startling termination to his long search. Had Sam remained a foe to society the detective would doubtless have put hands upon him long years before. But honesty and business regularity had kept the boy away from the streets and dens where the detective was always looking for him.

The hours and the haunts of Sam had been far different from those which were over in the mind of the watchful detective.

He was utterly astounded at the ease with which his game had evaded him. It was the ease of one who goes regularly and systematically to his work, always walking through the same streets, eating at the same place and entering the same business doors. "No matter," said Pryor to himself. "Sam goes now to prison, and I shall find Bessie."

The detective, in uttering the words "I shall find Bessie" seemed to have forgotten the adage that there's many a slip between the cup and the lip.

The manner in which he had been recently baffled regarding the lost child should have restrained his over-confidence.

On the day after he had seen her drive off from the ball in a carriage he disguised himself as a policeman and walked up and down before the house in which the entertainment had been given.

Finally he paused and entered into conversation with a servant girl who was sweeping the steps of the mansion.

She appeared to be pleased with his conversation, and soon the two were engaged in confidential gossip regarding the ball of the previous night.

"I saw a beautiful young lady, with blue eyes," he said, "drive away from the ball. I think hers was the most lovely face that left the house last night. She dropped her handkerchief out of the carriage window, and I picked it up for her. I wonder who she was?"

He then described her person and dress, mentioning particularly the antique necklace she wore, the golden hair and chain.

"Oh, I remember that necklace," said the girl. "I helped her in the ladies' dressing-room. There's where I saw it. She said she had always wore it since she was a little girl, and when she grew up she had it made larger so she could wear it. That's Miss Thorne—Miss Bessie Thorne. Everybody knows her. She's a great belle."

"Was is her father?" said the disguised detective.

"He's Henry Thorne, a rich merchant. They live in great style. Miss Bessie has several gentlemen dead in love with her. But they say she don't care for any of them."

"Well, good-morning; I must go round the street, or I'll have some one reporting me for neglect of duty," said Pryor, and away he walked to a public-house, and, entering, asked to see a directory.

He soon found the name of Henry Thorne, and the number of his place of business.

Then he wrote down upon a slip of paper the street and number of the merchant's residence. This paper he thrust into his pocket, and then resumed his walk.

He found no difficulty in reaching the place where Miss Bessie Thorne lived.

He lounged about the neighbourhood for several hours, and then was rewarded by seeing Bessie come down the street and enter the house by means of a latch-key.

There could be no farther question as to his success. Here she lived. Here was the home of Mr. Truelove's long-lost daughter.

Here she was living under a strange name, gained he knew not how or when. It was enough to know that she was reputed to be the daughter of Henry Thorne. As such the fashionable world knew her. All that remained for him now to do was to seek Mr. Truelove and allow him to pursue whatever course he pleased to regain his child.

(To be continued.)

THE JEWELLER OF FRANKFORT.

CHAPTER IX.

THE intelligence that brought agony into the Hartmann household filled Casar Bastian with delight. That he and the children were believed to have been lost at sea was a fact which secured him from immediate pursuit.

He had made careful inquiries and ascertained that Max Hartmann came to town only early in the morning and immediately returned home, and that his wife rarely left her home. After the calamity they believed to have befallen them they would be even yet more exclusive in their habits.

Hence he showed Caspar and Minna a little more indulgence, allowed them sometimes to play in the street, and one day in the exuberance of his good nature, having the night before had a run of luck at cards, offered to take them out into the country.

The children were delighted at the prospect of tasting a little fresh air after their long confinement. They went on board one of the shabbiest steamboats that ply on the river, but to their inexpe-

rienced eyes it was a little palace. Besides, they were surrounded by smiling faces, and happy children were laughing and talking and playing on the deck.

At the door of the first public-house they came to when they left the boat their guardian left them while he stepped inside to "see a gentleman." It is needless to say that during the interview the "gentleman" stood on one side of a counter and Bastian on the other, that their colloquy was very brief, that a little money changed hands, and that Bastian came out wiping his lips.

He called on another "gentleman" before they had walked many yards, and the same proceedings were gone through with, and then he conducted his charges along the river-side. After a pleasant stroll past beautiful gardens they came to a large and pleasantly situated roadside inn which appeared nearly filled with pleasure-seekers, and entering the hospitable door passed through to the large public room upstairs.

The large room was gaily decorated with flags, and a band at the farther end was playing inspiring airs. The tables were crowded, for a rifle company was taking lunch there.

Bastian secured a place at a side-table for himself and the children, and they partook of a luncheon, which Minna and Caspar enjoyed with a keen appetite.

After that they strolled amongst the trees, where they found many pleasant little family groups, picnicking in the shade or rambling about gathering leaves and wild flowers, which the younger ones plaited into wreaths and coronals.

Then came a stirring burst of military music, and the rifle company marched past with waving plumes and elastic step, flanked by a crowd of friends, male and female, all neatly dressed, who had gathered to grace their festival. They disappeared in a glade where their target had been set up, and soon the air resounded with the sharp reports of their weapons, and little puffs of smoke came up among the trees, filling the air with the pungent odour of exploded gunpowder.

"Run about, children, and amuse yourselves," said Bastian, as he stretched himself at the foot of a tree. "I'll stay here (mark the spot, Caspar) and—meditate."

Caspar made a rapid note of the locality and its landmarks—a huge oak tree of peculiar form and a large ash which shaded the knoll on which Bastian had thrown himself down to rest—and then, taking his little sister by the hand, raced off with her as happy as a young deer.

Not that he had forgotten the bereavement which had befallen him. He often shed bitter tears over his orphanage. But a kindly Providence tempers the woes of childhood and sheds sunlight into the darkest passages of its life.

When the children were tired of racing they gathered leaves and wild flowers, and sat down and busied themselves in making a couple of wreaths to adorn their heads.

Little Minna was crowned as a princess of fairy land.

Caspar, with a willow wand for a lance, was her knight, and permitted to do valiant battle for her against all malevolent ogres, giants, enchanters, and evil spirits.

Then they went and drew near a group of children, who were singing merrily a child's song and dancing in a circle, with clapped hands, round a smiling group of their elders, parents and friends, who were seated in the centre of the whirling ring.

Caspar and Minna, neatly dressed, and flower-crowned, drew near a group, looking as if they would like to join it. A merry little girl, who appeared to be the leader of the revels, noticed them, and at a word from her the dance ceased.

"Where do you come from?" she asked.

"From fairyland," replied Caspar, smiling.

"Then you are welcome," replied the little lady who had addressed him; "for this is a fairy-ring. Visitors from elfland are welcome to join us."

Caspar and Minna delightedly accepted the invitation, and were instantly, by the freemasonry of childhood, placed on a familiar footing with the strangers.

They danced and sang till they were tired; then the little family party had a collation on the grass, of which their chance guests were invited to partake freely.

While these innocent amusements were in progress Bastian, reclining under the oak tree, was indulging in his meditations.

One of the gentlemen on whom he had called on his way had supplied him with a bottle containing spirits, and to this source of consolation the man frequently applied his lips—so frequently that he forgot where he was—forgot all about the children, and finally fell into a deep sleep, indicated by loud snoring.

The day passed away rapidly, and the setting sun at last projected long shadows on the grass. An elderly woman, belonging to the party which

Caspar and Minna had joined, said it was time to be going now.

"You and your sister are not alone surely?" she said to Caspar.

"No, madam; our—uncle"—he always hesitated when he pronounced that word—"is waiting for us a short distance from here."

Caspar took leave of their new friends, watched them sadly as they walked out of sight, and a sense of loneliness fell on his young spirit.

"Come, Minna," he said. "We must be going too."

But the little girl did not answer him.

Tired of play, she had fallen asleep on a grassy bank, her head pillowed on one arm, her fair hair streaming round it like a golden halo.

Caspar tried to rouse her; but she only opened her eyes to close them again, so her brother took her up in his arms and carried her to the place where he had left Bastian, where he laid her down, wrapped up in her grey shawl.

Bastian was still sleeping and snoring.

Caspar knelt beside him, and placed his hand on his shoulder.

"Mr. Bastian," he said, "wake up! Night is coming on, and it's getting chilly."

"Confound you!" growled the man, flinging his arm off. "Let me be."

Caspar was frightened.

"Mr. Baumann," he said, "we must be going home."

Bastian sat up and rubbed his eyes. They were bleared and bloodstained.

"All right," said he, in a hoarse voice. "I'm ready. Stop till I take a drink."

He grasped the bottle which lay beside him; but it was empty.

"Hallo! I say, young man," he exclaimed; "have you been drinking my liquor? If I thought so I would break every bone in your arm."

The truth of the man's condition flashed upon Caspar's mind instantly.

He had never been brought so directly face to face with intemperance before; but he had seen men with distorted and flushed faces, foul breath, stammering tongues, and unsteady gait, and they had been pointed out to him with pity and loathing, and he had been told they were intoxicated.

"I haven't touched your bottle," he said, sadly, but firmly, "and I wouldn't."

"I don't think you would," said Bastian, "you're too young to begin. You'll come to it, though. Liquor's the natural drink of man—water was only made for his navigation. It's all right, youngster—there's a gentleman down yonder—a friend of mine—will fill the bottle for me."

"No, he won't," said Caspar, and, seeing the vessel, he hurled it against the trunk of a tree, and dashed it in pieces.

Bastian sprang to his feet, his red eyes flaming, and made a few steps towards Caspar, but the stern, defiant eyes of the boy meeting his, as the keepers do the inmates, checked him and produced one of those changes of mood so characteristic of intoxication.

The lunatic's mind grasps tenaciously one fixed idea—the drunkard's brain swarms with constantly changing hallucinations.

"You—you—Caspar—turning against me," he said, "when I've loved you for upwards of three months. Everybody turns against me."

"You are your own worst enemy," said Caspar. "Now, sir, do you understand me? We must be going home."

"Didn't I tell you I was ready?" whined Bastian. "Don't you be too hard on me, Caspar, my dear boy."

Caspar lifted his sister in his arms again and led the way toward the pier.

Bastian accompanied him with very unsteady steps, sometimes lurching against him.

As they came near the pier Bastian made one or two efforts to slip into one of the public-houses in the vicinity, but Caspar's firm request, or rather command, to "move on" had the desired effect.

"Curse him!" muttered Bastian to himself. "He's educating himself for the police."

The boy's cheeks burned with shame as he saw the looks that were directed to his companion.

Holding his sister with one hand, he took a firm grasp of Bastian's arm and piloted him through the crowd.

He managed to get him on board the boat and into a seat in a corner of the cabin, when he fell asleep.

It was a hard task to rouse him up when the boat reached its journey's end, and to get him into an omnibus.

When they got out they had some distance to walk to their house, and Caspar led the way, Bastian following.

From time to time the boy turned to see that the man was at his heels; but when he got home he was nowhere to be seen. He had taken advantage of the crowd to slip away.

With a heavy heart he carried his sister upstairs to bed.

"What will become of us? What will become of him?" he thought.

He undressed himself, knelt down and said his prayers, and then crept into bed. In spite of his anxiety sleep came to him and mercifully closed his eyes.

It might have been midnight when he was awakened by hoarse cries of "Help! help!"

He sprang from bed and rushed into the next room. The gas was burning. Bastian, partially undressed, was crouching in a corner, his face writhing with agony—his eyes staring out of their sockets.

"Keep off! keep off!" he shrieked, as Caspar appeared. "Do you want to murder me?"

"Mr. Baumann—don't you know me? It is I—Caspar," said the lad, soothingly.

Bastian sat up, grasped his arm, stared into his face, and gradually recognized him.

"Why, so it is," he said, at length. "What did you leave me alone for?"

"Why don't you go to bed, Mr. Baumann?"

"I have been to bed—but they wouldn't let me sleep," he added, gazing in terror at the disordered bedclothes.

"They—who?"

"The reptiles! There's one! Do you not see that viper crawling away under the pillow? Well, that's one of them."

"It's only fancy, Mr. Baumann," said the boy.

He lifted the pillow.

"There's nothing there, I assure you."

"No more there is!" said Baumann. "I tell you what, young man—they're afraid of you. They ain't a bit afraid of me."

"Will you go to bed, sir?"

"Yes, if you'll stay by me."

"That I will, sir."

"And keep the light burning?"

"Yes—yes."

Baumann then finished undressing, tumbled into bed, and was soon fast asleep. His face was purple, and the veins on his forehead seemed gorged with dark blood. His breath was hoarse and difficult. The boy dipped a napkin in cold water and applied it to his forehead.

When the morning light, streaming into the room, overpowered the flame of the gas Bastian opened his eyes, and beheld Caspar in his night-clothes asleep in the arm-chair holding his own hand. The noise he made in getting out of bed roused the lad.

"Caspar," said the man, "go to bed, you'll take cold here. How did you come here?"

"Last night, sir," said Caspar, sadly, "you called for help. You didn't know me at first. You were off your head and seemed in mortal terror, and talked wildly."

"What did I say?" asked Bastian, with a look of alarm.

"You said there were vipers in your bed and you couldn't sleep."

"Was that all?"

"All I could make out."

Caspar, said the man, "this thing shan't happen again. You know what was the matter with me. I had been drinking to excess. I had made a beast of myself—that's the truth and I know it."

"If I were a man," said the boy, "and such a thing had happened to me once it would never happen again."

"You speak and think like a man. I—I ask your pardon. Now leave me—sleep till breakfast time."

"I was a beast—and an idiot," thought Bastian when he was left alone. "This kind of thing must stop. In one of these fits I might blab things that would—"

But then who ever had such a run of ill luck as I have had?—Bewildled out of the best part of my plunder—meeting worse sharpers than I am at cards—this boy and girl on my hands—in a strange country where I haven't learned the ropes—who wouldn't have taken to the bottle? But, Caspar Bastian!"

and he looked at his swollen face in the glass, and shook his fist at it, "you must know when to pull up. Never again do you take a drop too much! Do you hear me?"

His prudent resolutions, it will be seen, were prompted by no other principle but self interest.

This man lived only for himself.

CHAPTER X.

BASTIAN did not lack self-control when he chose to exert it.

The terrible scene just described was a warning which he heeded. But there was one thing which he either could not or would not give up—the gambling-habit.

His occasional winnings blinded him to the fact that the general run of luck was against him, and what he had saved of his ill-gotten means was rapidly absorbed by his fatal passion.

As his resources diminished he descended in the scale of his living, shifted from one lodging-house to another, always for the worse, and finally took

the children to a dirty place in an obscure street, kept by a slatternly landlady.

One morning he had a talk with Caspar.

"It's strange, my boy," said he, "that I get no word from either of your uncles. I don't like to say it, but it seems to me as if they were unwilling to do anything for you."

"Impossible!" said Caspar, colouring up. "They loved us too dearly."

"Ah, you don't know the world," said Bastian, with a hypocritical sigh. "Out of sight out of mind, as the saying goes. It isn't every day you pick up such a man as I am."

"Are you sure that all your letters have been properly directed, sir?"

"Quite sure."

"But we have changed our quarters so often."

Bastian shook his head.

"The hitch isn't there," he said. "Every other day I go round to our old lodgings and make inquiries. No letters have come. I shouldn't mind it if I wasn't so poor myself, but I can't get anything to do, and I'm pretty nearly dead broke. If I hadn't been we shouldn't be living in this hole. Now I was thinking you might do something to help yourself and your sister."

"Oh, sir—oh, Mr. Baumann!" cried the boy, eagerly, "show me the way, and I will be so glad to work. I'm tired of idleness—tired of being a burden on you."

"Don't speak of your being a burden, Caspar," said the man. "You know how I love you both."

The next day Bastian told the lad that he thought he had found a place for him.

The proprietor of a shop wanted a boy, and he explained what there was to do. Caspar would be occupied from early in the morning until the evening, but the remuneration was magnificent—sixteen shillings a week!

There was more than some of the richest men in the city paid, but the extra money given by Mr. Jobbs was in consideration that Caspar could speak German as well as English, and would be expected to act occasionally as interpreter.

Mr. Jobbs prided himself on keeping a polyglot establishment.

There were immense placards in three languages posted up at every window, announcing "Here German is spoken," "Spanish spoken here," "French spoken here."

Bastian took Caspar into the shop, and presented him to Mr. Jobbs.

Mr. Jobbs was an oily, fat man, with a dozen yellow hairs on his head, which hairs he parted in the middle. He was "bulbous beneath the ribs," as Dr. Livingstone says, and his corporation was crossed by a ponderous gold chain, with which many times a day he hauled up an enormous chronometer from the recesses of a deep pocket.

He was as proud as the immortal Dutch trader

Who every morning said "I am
The richest merchant in Rotterdam."

"This is the boy," said Bastian.

"I see a boy," replied Mr. Jobbs, pompously, "and I'm going to examine him thoroughly afore I takes him. I never buys a pig in a poke, Mr. — what's your name?" Mr. Plimmins, vacate that stool for a moment."

The clerk addressed stuck his pen behind his ear and jumped down from his high stool.

At a signal from the merchant Caspar climbed into the vacant place.

Mr. Jobbs put on a pair of gold-bowed spectacles, and looked at the lad, whose cheeks turned crimson under the scrutiny.

The eye of the great man, after surveying his countenance, moved down his right side and leg, then up the left leg and left side, and concentrated its rays in a focus on the blushing face.

"You don't drink?" he asked.

"No, indeed, sir."

"Nor smoke cigars?"

"No, sir."

"Nor swear—nor gamble?"

"No, sir."

Mr. Jobbs then swelled like a toad and asked him if he spoke German. They were the only words of the language he had ever been able to master.

"Sprochen sie Deutsch?" asked Mr. Jobbs.

"Ja, mein Herr."

"I see he's a master of the lingo," said Mr. Jobbs, nodding his head approvingly to Bastian. "His accent is perfect. I'll take him. You can leave him here. Young man, your name is—"

Caspar was about to give his name when Mr. Jobbs frowned, and continued, with a wave of his hand:

"Your name, while you are connected with this establishment, is Cash No. 5—or Number Five, for short. Number Five! get down off that stool!"

Caspar instantly obeyed, and Mr. Jobbs, with a fat smile, placed his hand on his head.

Never before had a boy had such a welcome.

Caspar proved quick to learn and prompt in the discharge of his duties. They kept him busy from



[BASTIAN'S ENEMY.]

early in the morning until late in the evening, but he was always willing, never murmuring. The only hardship in his lot was his separation from his sister. Little Minna was asleep when he left home, and asleep when he returned at night; but out of the seven days in the week there was one blessed day which he could call his own—the Sabbath. That day he devoted to the little girl.

Out of his earnings, which he paid regularly over to the man he styled his benefactor, he received back, at least for a few weeks, the generous sum of two shillings.

Bastian never entered a church, but he dared not object to the children going to one in the neighbourhood. They did so on Sabbath mornings, and in the afternoons, when they were fine, Caspar took Minna to one of the parks. After paying the fares both ways he still had something over to buy a cake or an apple for her, and even a little surplus, out of which he sometimes bought a periodical, reading the stories aloud for Minna's benefit.

She was a wonderfully bright child and began to beguile her time with sewing, Caspar purchasing needles and thread for her from the merchant—Mr. Jobbs liberally charging him only wholesale prices for the articles. An experienced seamstress would have smiled at the way in which the child blotted the linen and sewed on the buttons of their clothes, but the smile would have been blended with a tear.

Both their under and outer garments now sadly needed repairs, and Bastian never renewed their wardrobe.

One Saturday night Mr. Jobbs, after the employes were paid off, beckoned Caspar to him.

"Young man," he said, "you tell your uncle that you must dress better. I've had my eye on you, and I'm sorry to say you're the worst-dressed boy here. I pay my boys more than Stewart or McCreary does, and I expect them to be decently clad. No patched garments for me! It's an insult to my customers and a reproach to the establishment. That's all—Number Five, you can go now."

Caspar, when he paid over his week's wages to Bastian, repeated what Mr. Jobbs had said to him.

"Mr. Jobbs had better mind his own business," growled Bastian. "How am I, with three mouths to feed, and getting out at elbows myself, to dress you like a gentleman, I'd like to know? And this reminds me to tell you that I'm dead broke. Ill luck has followed me like a wolf. The old woman here has just got the last sixpence out of me—and we've got to move again."

"When, sir?"

"To-night."

"And where are we going?"

"You'll see soon enough," answered Bastian.

"This isn't a first-class hotel, is it? This den doesn't look much like it, does it?"

"No, indeed, sir."

"Well—this is a palace compared to the hole we've got to burrow in."

The boy's heart sank within him. He had read dismal tales of poverty and its habitations, and his imagination conjured up some of these direful scenes.

But all his fancies fell short of the horrible reality that awaited them. The lodging to which Bastian conducted the two children that night was a cellar. It was so far below the surface of the ground that it required a long flight of steps to reach it. Running through to the back yard was a dingy apartment, floored with uneven deal boards, and dimly lighted, which revealed a dirty bar with its beer-engine and shelves filled with bottles, decanters, and fly-spotted lemons, and some tables and chairs, at which a number of men were seated. A red-faced woman who stood within the bar was Mrs. Blossom, the landlady.

On one side a door, half open, showed a range, at which a dirty, slatternly girl was boiling and frying. The air was close and fetid, for the place was ill ventilated, and rank tobacco-smoke was added to its odours.

Bastian seemed familiar with the den, for the landlady blinked and smiled to him, and one or two of the customers at the side-tables looked up, and nodded to him.

Mrs. Blossom came out of the bar.

"And so these are the dear children, are they?" said she. "Come, my darling," she said to Minna, "and give aunty a sweet kiss."

But Minna shrank away from the woman and clung to her brother's hand.

"Oh! you're too fine a lady, are you?" said the landlady. "Well, your proud stummick 'I come down here before long, I reckon. I suppose, you'll want supper for the young ones?"

A bit of bread and cheese and some milk," said Bastian.

The three sat down at one of the dirty tables, and the food, such as it was, was set before them. But neither the boy nor girl could eat.

Bastian took a few mouthfuls and drank up the milk.

"Perhaps you'd like to go to bed, my dears?" said Bastian.

"If you please, sir," said Caspar.

"We are to have the room to ourselves, Mrs. Blossom?" asked Bastian.

"So long as you pays the price agreed upon," replied the landlady.

Bastian beckoned the children, and, opening a

rickety door, showed them into a narrow dark room, against the walls of which stood three bunks like those of a fore-castle of a ship. Two or three wooden stools there were also. The light came from a round hole in the upper part of the door and from a dirty square of glass that looked out into the back yard.

"It's a poor hole enough," muttered Bastian.

"But beggars mustn't be choosers. You may thank your stars you've got a roof over your head. Thousands of children in this city sleep in carts, and areas, and in sheds, without a rag of bedclothes. That's your bunk, Caspar, and that's yours, Minna—and here's mine. Come—don't make wry faces. I've done the best I could for you. It isn't so bad after all. Sometimes they have music in the next room, and that'll put you to sleep, or you can lie awake and listen to it. Now, by the way, Caspar, you can tell Mr. Jobbs that I've ordered a suit of clothes for you."

"Oh! thank you, sir."

"We mustn't lose that sixteen shillings a week, my boy, for a suit of clothes."

He left the children and they undressed and went to bed. Caspar could not close his eyes. Suddenly Minna uttered a piercing scream.

"What's the matter, darling?" cried Caspar, slipping out of bed.

"Oh! Caspar, I'm so frightened! A great black thing just ran over me."

The door opened and the landlady appeared.

"What are you yelling for, you brat?" she cried Caspar told her.

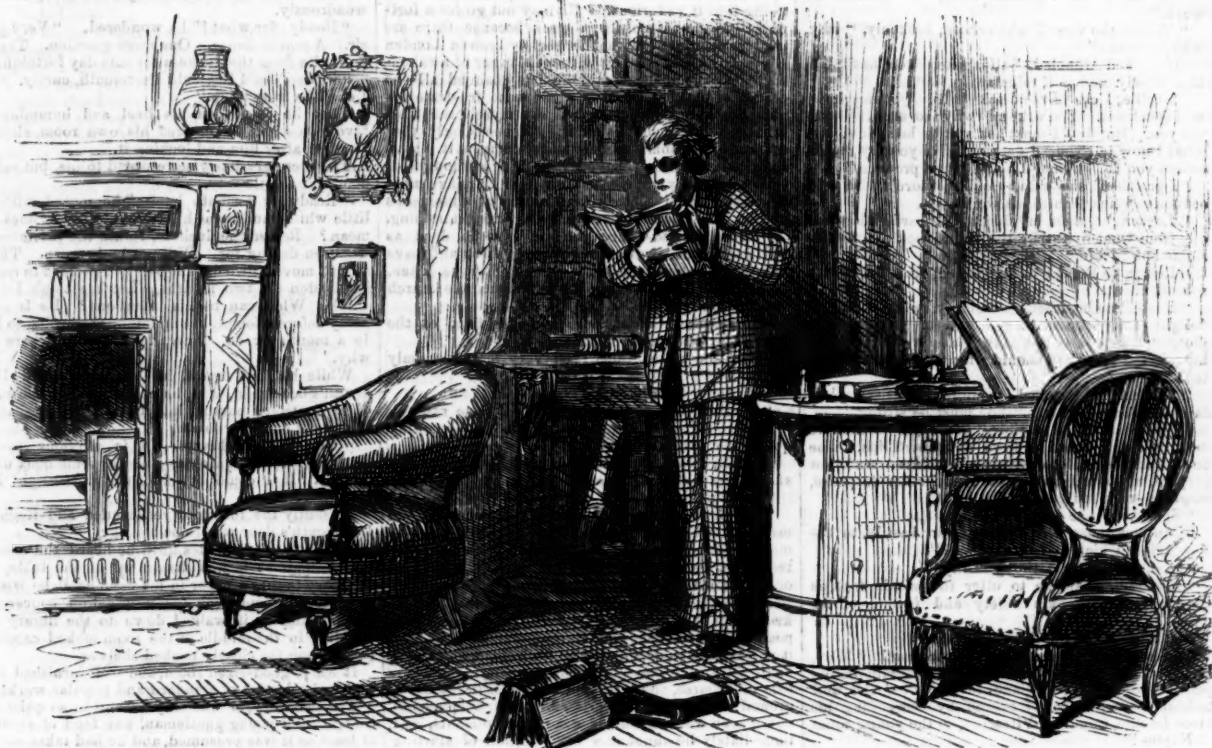
"Why, if the child ain't afeared of rats!" she cried. "You never heard tell of such a thing, did ye, Jim?"

"Rats!" said Jim, making his appearance. He was a boy of perhaps fifteen, with a hard face of a man of thirty—wore a fur cap, shockingly dilapidated clothes, and was smoking the stump of a cigar. "Rats! I have heard tell of 'em, but I never heard of being afeared of 'em. When I gives a sworby at my hotel I'll show you rats. Don't be afeared, young 'uns. Jest you say 'scat,' and they'll mizzle like a sneak thief with the police after him."

"And if I hear any more of your noise," said Mrs. Blossom, "I'll turn you out into the street, heck and crop. I keeps a respectable, quiet house, and I won't have no disturbances."

The frightened child sobbed herself to sleep at last—but it was not until near morning that Caspar's eyes closed—not until the racket in the next room had ceased and Caspar Bastian had turned into his bunk.

(To be continued.)



[ANOTHER LINK.]

FICKLE FORTUNE.

By the Author of "Maurice Durant," etc.

CHAPTER LV.

Trust not those cunning waters of his eyes,
For villainy is not without such rheum.

Shakespeare.

YOUR villain of the Captain Dartmouth stamp seldom lacks courage; he may—nay he invariably is—mean-souled, cruel and unscrupulous, but he is generally possessed of an amount of animal courage, coolness and aplomb, that often bears him up through a great part of his career, and sometimes carries him through to the end of it in triumph and safety.

Reginald Dartmouth had no sooner become convinced of the utter hopelessness of Count Vitzarelli's plans than he determined to avail himself of them to recover some of the many thousands he had advanced towards their accomplishment.

Unscrupulous to the uttermost he cared no more for honour than a cut-purse cares for morality. A stranger to fear he entirely disregarded and scorned the penalty which the Secret Society exacted of treason.

He trusted to his clear, keen long-sightedness to carry him triumphantly through the dilemma, and made his plans.

Accordingly the morning after the count's visit saw him, exquisitely attired as usual, ascending the steps of the mansion in Grosvenor Square which the Vitzarellis occupied.

To his inquiry whether the countess was at home the elaborately liveried servitor returned an affirmative, and with great respect ushered him into the small drawing-room.

It was empty, but Reginald Dartmouth, with an air almost of proprietorship, dropped into the luxurious fauteuil and stroking his silky moustache connoised over the part he intended playing.

After a few minutes' waiting he heard the door open and rose to receive the countess.

She looked very beautiful in her light morning robe of muslin, and her eyes lit up with a flash of seeming satisfaction and pleasure, while a thrill of delight ran through him at the remembrance that this beautiful woman was his. Such a feeling a fowler might experience as he saw his snare close round a stately kingfisher—not love but the delight of mere possession.

He bent over her hand and pressed his lips to its white, smooth surface—he knew better than to offer a more familiar embrace—and in his musical voice said, by way of greeting:

"Am I too early, Lucille? I feared to find you

unrisen still. But, ah! well—I could wait no longer."

She smiled, but the next moment her face looked calm and cold as usual.

"I am an early riser, Captain Dartmouth."

"Nay," he murmured, reproachfully. "Not Captain Dartmouth now surely, Lucille. I am Reginald to you or nothing."

"Reginald then," she said, in a voice that was utterly devoid of love, or the resemblance of it. Reginald, if you like it better. It is a pretty name, though rather deep and grave to Italian ears."

"Change it to what you please," he said, eagerly, leading her to the sofa, and seating himself at her side, while he still retained her hand. "Change it to what you please, Lucille. I cannot but hate it if you dislike it. Change it; it is yours."

"No, not yet," she said, with a slight flush, quietly disengaging her hand as she spoke. "Not yet; there were—"

"Conditions, or rather a condition," he murmured, eagerly, filling up her pause. "I have not forgotten, Lucille. Would it be possible for me to forget? The condition was—"

He hesitated.

The countess's face paled and her hands knit together as in anguish at the effort of restraining some great emotion.

"Shall I repeat it?"

She inclined her head.

"That I discovered the villain who deceived your sister—nay, my sister, Lucille, for all who own your name are dear to me."

"Yes," she said, tremulously, keeping her eyes fixed upon the distant corners of the room.

"I have not forgotten the condition, Lucille. Indeed I came here this morning to ask you—ay, to implore you to release me from it."

She turned to him with a sudden gesture.

"Give up the hope of my life?" she said.

"No," he replied, eagerly. "But to refrain from setting it up as a barrier to our union."

"Lucille, since the night I heard your story," he continued, his voice wondrously soft and pleading, "I have been unable to dismiss it from my mind. All other matters, important as some are, have given way before the intensity of it. I have scarcely slept at night. I have been in a dream all day, seeking some means of attaining your purpose. This morning I have come to implore you to cancel the condition that its fulfilment may be more thoroughly gained. You ask me, Lucille, to postpone our marriage until this nameless, unknown villain has been discovered and punished. I answer that I am as eager as your-

self to find him, but that the chances of success are merely lessened by our separation. Let us join, not only in name but in fact as man and wife, to hunt out the destroyer of your sister. Singly we can do little, together we may—nay we must succeed. Once married we will leave no stone unturned. We will trace the history of her life to its last days. We will search every capital and court of Europe. We will—oh, Lucille, we must succeed."

At the impassioned fervour of his voice her resolution wavered.

After all why should she remain firm? Why should she deny him?

He loved her, he was an honourable man. She had his promise delivered in so sweet a voice, and she had no cause to doubt his sincerity.

For the rest Lucille, Countess of Vitzarelli, cared but little.

What love she had to give was long since buried with the sister her mother had consigned to her. If she must marry, as well this handsome, powerful Englishman as another—nay, all things considered, much better.

With his keen eyes gleaming from beneath his drooping eyelids he read these thoughts as their outward signs flashed across her face, and, seizing the moment, whispered:

"Lucille, say yes. Your heart says it, I know, let your lips give it voice. You know I love you. You cannot doubt that I will be true to my promise. I swear not to rest until the mystery of her death has been cleared up and the cause of it punished!"

"You swear?" she said, hurriedly, almost breathlessly. "Ah! how can you realize the passionate thirst that devours me for revenge upon the unknown villain—how can you understand? Nay, you cannot. But you swear?"

"I swear!" he said, solemnly.

"Then I yield," she said, in a low voice.

He caught her hand and raised it to his lips, then venturing still farther drew her towards him and pressed a kiss upon her white brow.

Then ere she could regain her composure he went on, softly, dulcetly:

"And now, Lucille, you will grant me still one other boon. Do not keep me in suspense too long. You have given me the right to claim you as my wife. Let me exercise it quickly."

She started and looked at him with half-frightened eyes.

"You will not say no," he murmured. "If you knew, Lucille, how I love you, if you knew too how eager I am to commence the pursuit you would not say no when I ask you to be mine at once."

"At once!" she breathed.
 "At once," he repeated, softly. "Within the week."

"Within the week!" she echoed, brokenly, "why, why, so soon?"

He looked troubled, half spoke, then hesitated, then slowly, and as if reluctantly, said:

"Lucille, I can have no secrets from you, my heart will speak out. You ask me why so soon. I will tell you. But first I must ask you to keep inviolate what I now tell you. I dare not give you my reason unless you do. Come, Lucille, your promise."

"I promise," she said, yielding more to his soft, seductive voice than to his words.

"Last night, then, my darling, I heard, I dare not say from what lips, that the count would return to Rome before a few days had passed."

"Return to Rome!" she echoed, transfixed with astonishment.

"Hush!" he breathed, warningly, with a flash of delight at the success of this commencement of his plot. "Hush, it is a secret, these walls must not hear it, for fear they should whisper it to their master!"

"But, but," she murmured, regarding her passionless calmness in a moment. "You must be wrong."

"No, that is impossible," he said. "Believe me, Lucille, I heard it from undoubted lips. The count returns to Rome within a few days. And now prepare, my own Lucille, for still farther suspense, surprise—nay, indignation."

"Speak on," she said, hurriedly.

"Can you guess why he returns so hastily to the city 'gainst the success of his rebellion?"

"It is—oh, I dare to utter the words, true as they are—to purchase safety and favour of the court."

She turned pale but did not speak.

"Be calm," murmured Reginald Dartmouth. "More, Lucille, remains to be told. He goes to regain his old position, to give his allegiance to his old enemies, and to heal the long-opened breach by—wedding his niece Lucille, Countess Vitzarelli, to the young count of Naples!"

At this climax she started to her feet, her face dyed an unearthly crimson, her eyes flashing with fire.

"Hush," he cried, catching her arm. "For Heaven's sake do not utter a word or all is lost! Lucille, be calm, be seated, I beg, I implore you!"

And he drew her to the couch, she submitting with the air of a person lost in a dream or trance.

A few minutes passed in deathlike silence, the countess still cold and marble like, the plotter chuckling in the innermost recesses of his heart at the success of his scheme.

Then he said:

"Lucille, you are calm enough now for me to show you the proofs—not that I would think you need them—but, well, see here."

And he held out a despatch which had cost him three sleepless hours to forge.

She took it, but her eyes refused to follow the closely written lines.

With a gesture of impatience she pressed it back on him.

"I—I cannot read it—tell me."

"It is a despatch from my secret agent who keeps me informed of the slightest event; his despatches are forwarded by special messengers. This reached me last night; it contains but a few paragraphs concise and formal, but proven to the uttermost. Listen: 'Count V. will start for Rome within a few days. A diplomatic arrangement has been entered into. The alliance will be strengthened by the union of Count of N. with Lucille, Countess of V. State papers have been prepared which I have seen.' Thus far the statement. The proofs—see, Lucille, are here. Here in my hand I hold a copy of the draft my agent speaks of. See."

She waved her hand.

"Enough," she exclaimed, with tightly drawn lips. "I see it all—all. The abhorred villainy! Oh, Heaven, in whom can our trust? Saetta Maria, a Vitzarelli play traitor! Who, then, can be true?"

"I—I—Lucille," he breathed, drawing her cold, stately form toward him. "I am—I am true; trust in me! I would give my life to save you from this dishonour, for dishonour it is, base and terrible. Trust in me, Lucille, and I will turn the tables upon them all."

"Listen," he continued. "Last night the despatch came upon me like a flash of Heaven's lightning. Lucille, it nearly drove me mad. But I crushed the storm within me and sat down to think a way out of the terrible danger. There was but one way, and that was our immediate and secret marriage. I said to myself—The count will keep his intention even of the journey close until nearly the hour of his starting. He will then frame some plausible excuse

to disarm Lucille's suspicions, will probably tell her that Rome has fallen into our hands, and that he is going into it victorious. He may not go for a fortnight—he cannot go for a week because there are matters connected with the society here in London which he cannot neglect without danger of awakening his suspicions. I said he has planned all—be certain of that, and it now remains to frustrate his plans by more astute ones. I set myself the task, Lucille, and I accomplished it. It needs only your consent to foil this treachery and circumvent it. I have arranged everything, have left nothing unthought of—no emergency unprepared for. Our marriage must be consummated secretly, and almost at a moment's notice. The count must know—nay, suspect nothing.

"Once married—once you are mine in deed as well as in name—we can laugh him to scorn, and leave him to the punishment his treachery deserves. Then, Lucille, hand in hand we will commence the search you are so eager for."

She remained silent, with her eyes fixed on the ground for a few moments.

Then she raised them, and very slowly, calmly said:

"So be it. I trust you."

"Lucille," he breathed, with passionate rapture.

"You consent to let me save you! My own, my queen, my noble Lucille!"

A shade as of impatience crossed her brow, and she interrupted him, almost sternly:

"Your plans?"

"Are those," he said, hastily resuming his old manner. "You must hold yourself in readiness to meet me at any moment I may appoint. A portmanteau must be kept packed and ready. Not by sign or word must you rouse the suspicions of the count. Remember that he will be unusually watchful, and keep a guard on every look—every gesture. I will postpone the ceremony until the latest moment that it will be safe to do so, and in all things, Lucille, I shall not forget that necessity, necessarily alone compels this course, and try to place my bias in the background until your peril is passed. I shall keep a lookout, a keen watch upon the count's movements, and immediately he announces his intention of starting for Rome will arrange for the marriage. You will hold yourself ready; Lucille?"

"I will," she said.

He rose, fearing to lose by staying one tithe of the advantage he had gained.

"I must tear myself away, my own, for much remains to be done. Farewell for a while."

She gave him her hand and allowed him to kiss her forehead in the same dreamlike look, then, as if with a start, stopped him by a gesture, and said:

"The luck! Has anything been done to recover it?"

"Yes," he murmured, his hand upon the door, for he heard the count's voice in the hall, and wished to get away without meeting him. "Yes, I have offered a reward, dear Lucille, but it has not been found. I say not been found, for had it been the largeness of the reward would have caused its restitution. Do not fear," he added, in a whisper, "it will be restored," then, with another low-breathed farewell, he was gone.

CHAPTER LXI.

Stand not upon the order of your going,
 But go at once. Shakespeare.

CAPTAIN DARTMOUTH'S secretary was an observant young man, and happening to be in his room as his master passed through it after his return from Grosvenor Square he saw with a sharp glance through the dark spectacles that the handsome, daring face wore a slight smile of triumphant satisfaction and pleasure.

This set him wondering.

"Some fresh villainy," he thought, "or a step farther in the old. How, I must guess what I can."

Accordingly he rose and followed the captain a few steps, crouching behind his hand as a hint that he wished for his attention.

"Well, what is it, Stanfield?" asked Reginald Dartmouth, stopping short and fixing him with the pleasant look upon his face still. "What is it? I wish to Heaven you would pluck up a little spirit and speak out instead of bawling like an uneducated apple-woman. What is it?"

"I fear I disturb you, sir," said the secretary, apologetically. "But I wished to ask you what reply you would like sent to the steward at Dale; he writes requesting to know your intentions as to the house for the autumn months."

It was such a pertinent home thrust of a question that Reginald Dartmouth almost started, but a glance at the expressionless face before him reassured him and he said:

"Ah, I promised to tell him. Well, I don't know, Stanfield. Suppose you say that he had better prepare for a month hence—then it will be ready."

These last words were spoken musingly and with a peculiar intonation that sharpened the hidden eyes wondrously.

"Ready; for what?" he wondered. "Very good, sir. A month hence. One more question. There is an invite from the duchess for this day fortnight."

"Refuse," said Reginald Dartmouth, curtly. "Say I shall be from town."

Then he turned on his heel and humming his favourite opera air entered his own room, shutting the door after him and locking it.

The secretary likewise returned to his, but set the door ajar a little way.

"Ready for a month hence," he mused, with his little white hand up at his brow. "What does that mean? Refuse the duchess, refuse the invitation he has been fishing for. Will not be in town. This is a fresh move. Two days ago he had decided to remain in London for two months. Let me think, let me think. What can be his intentions? He is going away before a fortnight and intends returning to Dale in a month or so. Now, to discover where and why."

While he thus mused he heard Reginald Dartmouth's door open, and, listening, caught the sound of his footsteps passing into the library, a spacious apartment one floor lower.

"Come to the library. He is studious to-day. Studious! not he. He has gone for some book of reference. If I could but find which it might help me."

Presently the footsteps reascended and Reginald Dartmouth's door was relocked.

Waiting a few minutes until he heard the wheels of the chair as it was drawn up to the table, the secretary taking a paper in his hand as if he wished to refer to some book for information concerning some matter in it, walked down to the library and standing in the middle of the room looked carefully round upon the closely packed shelves.

It was a good-sized room, and well furnished with a capital selection of standard and popular works.

The secretary, as was only natural in so quiet and thoughtful a young gentleman, was fond of reading, at least so it was presumed, and he had taken charge of the library and its contents.

Only a few days back he had spent some hours in arranging the shelves, putting the backs of the books level and classifying them.

So thoroughly had he done it that on the completion of his task he had nodded with self-approval and asserted to himself that he should know if a volume had been taken down or misplaced.

That assertion he was now putting to proof.

Carefully and keenly he scrutinized each shelf, through poetry, the drama, history, medicine. No, no volume had been taken down, or if it had it had been so replaced that it was impossible to distinguish it.

Stop. There amongst the law volumes was one slightly projecting.

Very carefully he took it down and as carefully let it fall open, thinking that the chances were greatly in favour of its opening at the page last read.

He was right, for stooping down and examining the leaves he discovered—what? No finger mark, no pencil jotting, not even a slip of folded paper as book marker, but a few fragments of cigar ash.

In a moment he remembered that Reginald Dartmouth had struck a light; he had heard it in the next room—nay, more, there was the odour of a newly lit cigar hanging about the library now.

That was the clue.

With a fast-beating heart he ran his eyes over the headings of the paragraphs.

One caught his attention.

"Relations between the Catholic and Protestant subject."

That was enough.

Replacing the volume, he returned to his own room.

"Soh," he murmured, "the countess is a Catholic; Reginald Dartmouth professes and disposes Protestantism. I see it all. He is going to marry her, and clandestinely too, or it would be annotated. Good Heaven! if it be not stopped she will be sacrificed to him before a fortnight; for there is no doubt that the journey will be a runaway marriage. Well, she does not deserve it!" he murmured, with a scowl that was wondrously woman-like. "For a woman that would be snatched by Reginald Dartmouth's fair speeches and false face would give her hand to the evil one were he but dressed in bronzed cloth. But she must be saved. There is no time to lose; I must rouse Rebecca and her ally, Sir Charles, to their work!"

With that he sat down and penned a short note, signing himself as before, "A Well-wisher."

"There is no time to lose. Search the well. If villainy can be unmasked H. D. may be found."

"There, that will spur them on, or nothing else will!" he said.

CHAPTER LVII.

Truth will come to light; murder cannot be hid long. *Shakespeare.*

It is rather startling to suddenly discover by an anonymous communication that a matter which you have been hugging to your heart for some time past with the most profound assurance of its being your own particular secret is no secret at all, or at least that another person shares it with you.

It is still more startling and embarrassing to be placed in the position of utter ignorance as to the identity of the unwelcome partner of your bosom mystery, and to be perpetually in a state of expectation and excitement thereto.

All this Rebecca experienced.

To say that she was astounded at the contents of John Stanfield's first note is to employ but a weak word for her utter amazement.

She sank upon a chair and sat staring at the short epistle with eyes wide open, and, we must confess, lips also.

Here was she congratulating herself upon her particularly clever and inscrutable mode of unveiling Reginald Dartmouth's secret and suddenly without a moment's warning comes the knowledge that she has simply been being a mole like a mole within a few yards of mole No. 2.

On the first reflection she had almost concluded that Reginald Dartmouth had written the note himself, but a second consideration showed her that the supposition was scarcely likely.

She thought of it a great deal, and at last—did as she was told. That is to say she gave directions that no further advertisements were to be inserted.

Then she locked the mysterious communication within her neat little desk and gave herself up to pondering over it and trying to decide what to do. The anonymous correspondent did not leave long for quiet reasoning.

Very quickly, and quite as startlingly, came the second note.

That was the feather which broke the back of Rebecca's reserve.

Within half an hour of its receipt she had despatched a special messenger for Sir Charles Adderson, and during the lapsing of the time necessary for his journey was in a state of ferment.

He arrived, cool and prepared as usual for anything that might turn up, but greatly wondering what had occurred and devoutly wishing that soon he should be allowed to have it out with Dartmouth after his own fashion.

Rebecca was in her own room when the sound of his horse's hoofs rattled over the gravel drive and with a dash of colour in her cheeks came out into the hall to meet him.

Sir Charles flushed a little and his eyes sparkled with something more intense than mere friendship as he almost sprang forward and clasped her hand.

"Well, Rebecca, here I am," he said, in his deep, manly tones. "You're looking well, awfully well."

Rebecca blushed again, and, dropping her hand very slowly, Sir Charles, before following her into the dining-room, turned and saw his horse led to the stables.

"Give him a careful wipe down before his feed, please, will you?" he said, and then returned to Rebecca.

She had seated herself at one end of the large, old-fashioned—but, oh! how comfortable—couch, and made room for him beside her.

"You have not been long coming," she said, looking at him with a kindly light in her clear, pure eyes, "and you are looking quite well again, Charlie, quite well again."

"Is kind of you to say that I haven't been long, Rebecca," he said, looking pleased. "Well, I really have put it on. The old boy set along; left your man a score of miles away. You must excuse my tweeds. The fact is I was just coming down the steps of the club when your man rode by. I fancied, I was sure rather, that I remembered him and stopped him. He gave me your note. I read it, walked off to the stables and had the hunter saddled, and away I came."

"Without food or any preparation," said Rebecca, the kindly light deepening in her eyes.

"Well, you know, Rebecca, I'd start for South Africa or the Islands of the Moon without my dinner and in a cotton shirt—that is to say, without a change of pocket handkerchiefs, if you merely held up your little finger. So it wasn't much to do, you know."

"It was," she said, in a low voice, "and I wish I could thank you as you deserve, Charlie, but—"

"All right," replied the open-hearted Charlie, "you've thanked me more than I deserve, worthless scamp that I am. Only tell me what you want, Rebecca, and I am ready for it."

"I want you to go and rest while Mary gets the luncheon," said Rebecca, determined not to open

up the Dale affair until the generous-hearted fellow had somewhat recovered from the fatigue of the journey. "There, you know how firm I can be. You must go," she said, as he tried to remonstrate; and so he went, very reluctantly, declaring that he didn't feel tired.

In half an hour he was sitting beside his cousin, attacking a cold ham, hurrying, as he said, because of Rebecca's obstinacy in refusing to tell him anything until he had eaten.

After luncheon they went into the garden, and, seated in one of the small arbours, secure from interruption, Rebecca, without a word of preface, placed the first note before him.

The reader will by this time have discovered for himself—and, we humbly trust, herself—that, although Sir Charles Adderson was no fool, nor anything approaching one, he possessed more heart than brains—that he was scarcely the man, true-souled, generous-minded though he was, to follow out and track through such a complicated maze as that which Reginald Dartmouth's villainy had created. He could have met a dozen men in hand-to-hand conflict with nature's weapons—the fists, or with the revolvers and rapiers of art, cheerfully and with a certain amount of pleasure; but to the unravelling of such a knotted skein as Rebecca had held out for his inspection he was unequal.

Like Rebecca, he stared at the note, and as an addition stroked his moustache fiercely.

Then he looked up, and, meeting her eye, returned to the note again.

"Well," she said, in a low voice, "what do you make of it, Charlie?"

"I—I don't know what to make of it," he replied. "You see, the fellow doesn't sign his name. It is anonymous. Now, everybody says you ought to burn anonymous letters, and if ever you find the fellow who wrote them kick him. But this is very extraordinary! You told me that no one knew anything of the Dale affairs but yourself and me."

"That is it," responded Rebecca, eagerly, "that is the mysterious part of it. I cannot conceive from whom this warning comes."

"The writing?"

Rebecca shook her head.

"It is so well disguised that it would be impossible to trace it. No, Charlie, trust me for thinking over every possible chance of a clue. There is not a single one. I cannot even conjecture from whom it came."

"Not Dartmouth himself?"

"No, he would be the last to write it, for fear of its being traced to him. Besides, he feels himself secure, depend upon it."

Sir Charles shook his head.

"If you can't find it out, Rebecca, how do you expect me, who am not half so clever?"

Then Rebecca placed the second note before him.

Sir Charles read it, and, much to her astonishment, sprang to his feet with a flush of delight.

"What?" asked Rebecca.

"By Jove! This fellow's a brick whoever he is. He's got it. He's set me something to do. You can't think, Rebecca," he said, dropping into the seat again, "what a worry it has been to me to sit with my hands before me doing nothing—I should like to have gone in for Dartmouth, and wrung it out of him. But you said that was quite out of the question. Now there's some work for me. Give me a spade and a pickaxe, and I'll have that wretch out in half a dozen hours. Bravo! the fellow's hit it, whoever he is."

Rebecca coloured with pleasure, then laid her hand upon his arm timidly and turned pale.

"You are a good fellow, Charlie," she said, "and I am grateful. But we must go to work cautiously still. You think this anonymous adviser is a friend, and so do I. You think too that he is giving us good advice, and so too do I. But we must be very cautious, remembering with whom we have to deal. Charlie, if you went down this minute with spade and pickaxe and discovered what there may be discovered in that well, went down alone and without witnesses, we should—or rather poor Hugh or Grace would—benefit nothing."

"Why not?" asked Sir Charles, rather afraid of this chance of his being balked.

Rebecca smiled sadly.

"Do you not guess what Reginald Dartmouth would say if we found what we expect—Sir Harry Darrell's genuine will? He would turn round and say that we had manufactured the will and put it there ourselves."

"By Jove!" breathed Sir Charles. "You're right, Rebecca! But what a clever girl you are! Of course he would. But surely you don't mean to let the chance slip? You'll let me clear the well out somehow or other?"

"Yes," said Rebecca, "and soon. What we must do is to consult Mr. Reeves, the old lawyer, and get

him to stand by with the doctor and any other influential person while the well is cleared, and then what we find can be attested as genuine and without suspicion."

"That's it," said Sir Charles, springing up and pacing to and fro in the little arbour, with his eyes flashing eagerly. "That's it, Rebecca, and for Heaven's sake don't let us delay."

Rebecca held up her face—very pale but very firm it was.

"We will not," she said. "The time has come!"

(To be continued.)

LITTLE SUNSHINE.

CHAPTER XXIV.

On the morning succeeding the night of the party the Count Garowski summoned a waiter to his room in the hotel at which he was stopping, and ordered him to call a cab.

He then proceeded to make his toilet, and shortly thereafter the cab arrived, and, entering it, the count gave some directions to the driver.

On rolled the cab, which in a very short time drew up in front of a dismal building, through whose dark portals so many criminals have made their entrances and exits.

"Now you wait here a little while," said the count to his Jehu, "and I will come again."

Running nimbly up the steps, the count made his way to an attorney's office, and was closeted with that functionary about half an hour, at the end of which time he emerged with a smiling face, and sought the prison warder, to whom he handed a note.

"Ah, you wish to see the prisoners here, instead of in their cells, do you?" asked the keeper.

"If you please," was the reply.

The keeper disappeared, and in a very short time he reappeared, followed by Lily Davis, Ernest Hartley and Tony Tucker, who had been a daily attendant upon the prisoners, if only for a few moments each day.

"Here is a gentleman who wishes to see you," said the keeper, addressing the young couple.

Both Ernest and Lily bowed courteously, and the Count Garowski remarked:

"Yes, my young friends, I come to see you on business. I had your friend."

"Yes, you're a fine old friend," interposed Tony Tucker. "I suppose you're one of these ere sneezers that hang about here. One of 'em has beat Mr. Hartley out of his watch and the other has got all the money that Little Sunshine put away in the bank, saved out of her hard earnings—every penny she had in the world—and now they've gone back on 'em. They promised to have 'em on out on bail before this, but since they've got all they could they've never come to see 'em. A pooley friend you are! Do you know what I've a good mind to take and do with you? I've a good mind to look out for you when you get outside and take and go to work and improve that head of yours."

And Tony Tucker looked as though it would have gratified him hugely to put his threat into execution then and there.

"Softly, softly, my young rooster," cautioned the warder. "You forget where you are, don't you? If you ain't very careful you may get a berth in one of the cells yonder. As for this gentleman I don't know who he is. I never saw him before. So far I know he's on the square, and the best thing you can do is to stop your clatter—you're not wanted here any longer."

"All right," replied Tony. "I'll go because I ain't got no choice in the matter. But I'll remember that old sardine's mug, and if he attempts to play any rough p'ints on to my friends, I'll pay him out the first time I see him in the street if I got six months for it."

And, scowling fiercely at the Count Garowski, Tony took his departure.

"Dat young friend of yours is very hasty," remarked the count, as he looked kindly, almost affectionately at Lily Davis; "he is not you might say in any bounty too hot to bear a sword, and somebody must look after him before he'll get in trouble."

"He is a good fellow, although a little rough," replied Lily, with a blush; "he has been very kind to us. He makes our cause his own. There is scarcely a day that he has not been with us, always ready and willing to do anything which lay in his power to assist us. I don't know how we could well have got along without him. He has not only acted as our messenger when we desired to communicate with our friends, but he has daily brought us little delicacies which we never could have had but for his kindness, and I fear he has sometimes pinched himself to procure them. He knows that we have been badly treated by certain men who call themselves lawyers,

and that is why he exhibited so much passion just now. Heaven bless him for all his kindness! If I am ever able I shall surely repay him!"

And Lily's eyes filled with tears of gratitude as she spoke.

"Vell, perhaps you shall be able to repay him some day," said the Count Gurowski. "I have come to help you and de young man; I will get you out on de bail—dat is if you will answer me some questions, eh?"

"That will depend entirely upon the nature of your questions, sir," replied Lily, who could not help regarding the count with some degree of distrust.

"Vell, den, in de first place," said the count, "how long have you and de young man been in de business of passing de counterfeit money, eh?"

"Sir, you are impudent!" interposed Ernest Hartley, whose face flushed with anger.

"You will keep silence, if you please, sar," answered the count, with a show of asperity. "I vas talk to de young lady; not to you. Ven I ask you de question den it will be time enough for you to answer, eh?"

"I have no doubt, sir," rejoined Hartley, "that you are some avaricious Jew who has come to prey upon our necessities. If such is the case, let me assure you that your errand will be fruitless. We have nothing left except the consciousness of innocence. Therefore begone, and do not insult us."

"Again I say I speak to de lady," said the count, turning toward Lily.

"I regard your question as an insult," replied Lily, "but I will answer it nevertheless. We were never in the business of passing counterfeit money, nor in any other business that was not strictly honourable."

"Den vat for are you in dis place, eh?" asked the count.

"We are the victims of circumstances," returned Lily. "A bad man gave me the money, and, supposing it to be good, I placed some of it in the hands of my friend to invest for me and kept some for my own use. It turned out to be counterfeit, and we were both arrested for attempting to pass it."

"And dis man dat gave you de money—you know him, eh?" asked the count.

"I do," answered Lily, blushing deeply.

"Vell, den, my little girl, his name—vat is his name?"

"That I will not tell you, sir," replied Lily, firmly.

"And vat for you won't tell me?" asked the count.

"Because I took an oath that I would not reveal his name," answered Lily.

"And you will go to de prison yourself and let your young friend go to de prison too for such an oath as dat!" exclaimed the count, raising his hands in surprise; "vy, my dear young lady, de grand people vid ever so much money would not keep such oath as dat, and you are so very poor."

"I know," replied Lily, proudly, "that I am but a working girl, but to me my oath is sacred. If I could but suffer alone I would not mind it, but it is bitter to think that I must drag the innocent down with me."

"Speak no more of that, dear Lily!" exclaimed Hartley, as he took both her hands in his and gazed lovingly into her face; "I have considered the matter fully and am willing to suffer with you. In fact, if my prison door were thrown open and I were told to depart a free man, I would not do it. Imprisonment with you is far preferable to liberty without you. As for this miserable Jew, pay no farther attention to him, for whatever his ability to help us may be he has not the slightest inclination to do so now that he knows we are penniless."

"Yea, dat is so—dat is so!" remarked the count, rubbing his hands; "I can do noting vidout de money—I cannot make my living dat way. Vot for I should go bail for you ven you tell me not de man's name, eh? You will not tell me de man's name? No? Vell, never mind for dat. See, mine leetle friend, I vill tell you de man's name!" And placing his mouth to her ear the count whispered the name of Luke Davis.

Lily gave a start and uttered an exclamation of surprise.

"So you see I know vidout you tell," said the count, gleefully; "vell, never mind—never mind—I can noting do for you ven you have no money. No, no, I cannot my living make in dat way. Goot-bye, my young friends—goot-bye; I can noting do for you—noting at all—no, no! Goot-bye!" And the Count Gurowski bowed himself out.

"I am glad he is gone!" exclaimed Ernest Hartley; "I think I should have strangled him had he remained longer! Come, Lily darling, let us to our cells and bear our affliction with what patience we may."

CHAPTER XXV.

AFTER the Count Gurowski left the prisoners he

bent his steps in the direction of old Flint's establishment.

Upon his arrival there the first person whom he encountered was Tony Tucker, who had but a little while before returned from his visit to the prison.

"My young friend," said the count, affably, "I want to see Mr. Flint. Can you tell me where I shall find him, eh?"

"Yes, I can tell you where you'll find him, and I don't wonder that you want to see him. You're his brother most likely. If you ain't you ought to be, for you look exactly like him. But take and look 'er here, old snoozer, if you call me yer young friend agin I'll take and go to work on you. I ain't got no such friends as you, I ain't, and I don't want any. I know what you're after. You've come here to hatch up some plan with old Flint to make that poor little gal and her lover worse off than they are at present. But let me corshin you not to do it, for just as certain as I catch you playin' any tricks I'll warn that old jaw of yours till the toothache would be a luxury to it. D'y'e hear that?"

"You have too much passion, my boy," said the count, quietly, "and you will make yourself some troubles some o' dese times. But I have no bad feeling against you. On de contrary, I vill be vot you call like de Christian. I vill do you some good for evil. I vill make de old man Flint double your pay, and make you work only half-time, and send you to school. Vot you tink of dat, now?"

"Think," replied Tony, in a tone of contempt, "why, I think that you are either a-blowin' or else that you and old Flint want to bribe me to do some dirty work of some kind. The idea of old Flint raisin' my wages and puttin' me on half-time, and sendin' me to school unless he had some big p'int to play is about as reasonable as to look for music from a crow. Now, look here, old mutton-head, I want you to understand one thing wunst for all. I'm a poor boy. I've worked hard all my life, and I've been kicked about from post to pillar like a football. I ain't got no book-larin' either, although I'd give one of my fingers if I could read and write. But for all this I've never did anything mean as I know of. I've never stole. I've never told a falsehood, and I've never had a fight unless I was obliged. Whenever anybody attempts to put on me I'm there, and that's about the worst that can be said of me. Now, I'd like to have my wages riz, and I'd like to go to school better'n anything else in all the world, and for this reason: I've got the poetiest and sweetest and best little gal atop o' de earth, and I want to marry her some day, and when I do marry her I want her to be as proud of me as I am of her. But how'n thunder I'm ever a-goin' to support her on my wages I can't exactly see. So every shilling added to my wages is a step nearer to marryin' her, and every step nearer to marryin' her is a step nearer to Heaven. But if old Flint and you would bury me up to my neck in gold, and give me a big house to live in and horses to drive and carriages to ride in, and Jennie Brown for my wife on condition that I'd help you to push poor little Sunshine and her lover farther into the mire, I'd not only refuse your offer but choke you to death for making it. Do you hear that, you old beef-eatin', puddin'-headed sardine? Do you hear it?"

"Oh, yes, I hear it, mine teer leetle boy—I hear it; but we shall see—we shall see vot you vill do ven de time comes. And now vill you tell Mr. Flint dat de Count Gurowski would like to speak mit him on very particular business?"

"Oh, yes, I'll tell him," growled Tony, "for I s'pose if I don't somebody else will. But I want you to recollect what I said just now, for I meant every word of it."

And Tony started to deliver his message.

He had not been long gone when he returned and conducted the count into the presence of old Flint, who had been busy in counting up his ill-gotten gains, and who was consequently in no very amiable mood upon being disturbed.

"Well, what do you want with me, sir?" he growled; "I have not the pleasure of your acquaintance, nor do I remember ever to have heard of you."

"Ah, yes, sir," returned the count, deferentially, "dat is very possible, for I have only just arrive in this country. But I have heard of you, mine friend—I have heard of you, very much."

Flint's heart gave a great bound, and he trembled with fear as the thought occurred to him that the person before him had in some way gained a knowledge of his villainy.

He was at his ease in a moment again, however, when the count continued:

"A man cannot always keep his good deeds hidden no more dan he can his evil ones, mine friend—as I said before, I have heard of you very much, and I want you to help me do some good. I am rich—very rich—and I must do some good mit my moneys—you understand, eh?"

Mr. Flint smiled affably.

The idea at once took possession of him that the Count Gurowski had in some way heard of the Society for the Relief of Aged and Indigent Widows, and being philanthropically disposed had come to add something handsome to the treasury of the society.

"Ah, yes, count," he said, rubbing his hands gleefully, "we should indeed make proper use of the means which Heaven has given us, and it is always refreshing to find a man who is unselfish enough in the time of his prosperity to remember the poor. Suffering and privation and misery are all around us, count. The papers are full of such cases daily, and we can scarcely stir without meeting them. As the poet says, my dear sir

"Whenever I take my walks abroad
How many poor I see."

But there are cases, my friend—oh, very many cases—that never meet the light. There are persons who are too proud to ask for aid, and they are the ones who suffer most. Such persons must be sought out, and forced to accept assistance, and, thank Heaven, there are some noble hearts who make it an especial point to find such people. I know some such, sir—I am proud to say I am intimately acquainted with some such. I suppose you have heard of the Society for the Relief of Aged and Indigent Widows? I have the honour to be the president of that society, sir. And, oh, the vast amount of good that we have accomplished! Oh, sir, if you could see the stricken hearts into which I have poured the balm of consolation and sympathy—the sad faces which we have made joyous—the wan cheeks to which we have restored the bloom of health—you would weep, as I do now, sir, blessed tears of joy and gratitude that you were made the humble instrument in accomplishing so much good!"

And Mr. Flint applied his handkerchief to his eyes.

"Yes, I have heard of de society," returned the Count Gurowski—"I have heard of him from one very nice young gentleman, Lord Mortimer Littleton."

The count had not heard Lord Mortimer say a word on the subject, but he shrewdly judged that as the two were intimate Lord Mortimer knew Flint's business thoroughly, and so he ventured the assertion.

"An excellent young man is Lord Littleton," broke in Flint, in a tone of admiration; "and a wonderful young man too. I am intimate with his worthy father, who does honour to the peerage. In fact, the old lord has placed him under my care. He is a very worthy and a very brilliant young man, I assure you!"

"I am glad he is a nice young man," returned the count—"very glad, because de nice young men are so scarce. I shall become better acquainted with him soon—after I shall do something for you and your society. How much shall I give your society now, eh?"

"Ah, my dear count," replied Flint, scarcely able to hide the joy which filled him in the contemplation of this rich and unexpected donation, "that I must leave to your own generosity. The society has need of all the means which it can procure. The society, I am sorry to say, is poor—very poor. The demands upon it are so many and so urgent that its treasury is always empty. Oh! the good it might accomplish with unlimited means! It is incalculable, count!—positively incalculable!"

"I suppose so," returned the count, after musing for a moment. "Vell den, I shall tell you vot I vill do. I shall make de society a present of ten thousand pounds at de next meeting, when I shall see some of de widows. I am a single man, and when I shall see one of dem dat is very pretty, den maybe I marries her, eh? But, before dat, you shall do somethings for me, eh?"

Flint's countenance fell. He had hoped to receive the money then and there. He had no doubt, however, that with a little trouble he could have a meeting which would make things appear regular, and thereby pocket the count's contribution. Concealing his disappointment as well as he could, therefore, he said, with an air of self-abasement:

"What can so humble an individual as myself do for so prominent and excellent a gentleman as the Count Gurowski? Command me at once, my dear sir! I shall be only too happy to oblige you!"

"Vell, in de first place," returned the count, "dere is a very goot boy vot you have—de one dat showed me to your room—he is a very goot boy. You shall double his wages, and you shall sent him to school."

"Sir!" exclaimed Flint, in a tone of astonishment; "you allow your philanthropy to run away with your judgment! The boy is a most unmitigated scamp, who already receives more than double what he is worth!"

"And yet you vill double his wages and send him to school," rejoined the count, confidently.

"Indeed I shall do nothing of the sort, sir!" replied Flint, who began now to think that the man before him was hardly as green as he pretended to be; "and, furthermore, sir, allow me to observe, sir, without wishing to give offence, sir, that you are busying yourself with matters that do not concern you, sir!"

And Flint ventured a slight frown.

"Perhaps so," replied the count; "but you will do vot I say. And dat is not all. You must do somethings more. Dere is a young girl—one Lily Davis—and a young man—one Ernest Hartley—dey are in prison, charged with passing counterfeit money—you must help me get dem out!"

And as he spoke the count coolly took a pinch of snuff.

"I begin to think, sir!" exclaimed Flint, now thoroughly aroused, "that you are either an impostor or an escaped lunatic, and this interview has lasted long enough. The idea of raising the wages of a miserable vagabond who is not worth the food he eats, and interfering in behalf of a couple of young reprobates who should have been in prison long since, is peculiarly rich. What next will you want, I wonder?"

"Vell, I shall tell you vot next I shall want," said the count, significantly, as he laid his hand upon Flint's shoulder and gazed fixedly and fiercely into his eyes; "I shall want you to conduct de police to de den where de counterfeit money is made."

Had a powder mine exploded at the feet of old Flint he could not have been more startled. For a moment his breath came quick and hard, his knees smote each other, and his teeth chattered with intense fear. At length, however, he managed to control himself somewhat, and attempted a show of bravado.

"What do you mean, you miserable old scoundrel?" he exclaimed, "by thus insulting a gentleman on his own premises? Begone at once, or I will send for the police and have you arrested."

"Yes, dat is right," rejoined the count, coolly; "you send for de police and dat vill save me de trouble. Dat is de shortest way, maybe—send for de police—I vill wait for him."

"No, I will go myself!" exclaimed Flint; "I will not trust a messenger. I will soon see whether a man is to be insulted with impunity on his own premises!"

And as he spoke he reached for his hat.

"Oh, no—excuse me," said the count, significantly; "you vill not go for him yourself. You vill stay mit me. Don't you see, if you should go for de police, you might forget and visit some of your friends, and den when de police should make a descent on de counterfeiters den day find de birds flown and all de evidence destroyed. Oh, no, Mr. Flint, dat vill not do. You vill stay mit me."

And as he spoke he placed his hand on the collar of Flint's coat.

Flint was a raw-boned, powerfully built man, and a desperate light gleamed in his eyes as he suddenly broke from his custodian and seized a heavy iron bar which lay on the window sill. Before he could wield it, however, he felt the cold touch of a pistol barrel on his temple and saw that his visitor was holding a revolver at his head.

"Oh, no, you don't, Mr. Flint," said the count, with a slight chuckle. "Did you suppose dat de Count Gurowski—de foremost detective in London—would go on such a business like dis mitout his tools? Oh, no, mine tear frient; dat wouldn't do. No, if you make any noises or any more attempts to get away like dis, den I shall have to pull de trigger, and den your blood and brains vill spoil all de vails and de floor. Better you shall sit down quiet and smoke your cigar vile I shall say some tings to you, eh? Come, dat is better dat you keep your brains in your head, eh? Ah, dat is right," he continued, as Flint, pallid with fear, dropped into a chair and covered his face with his hands.

"Now I shall tell you some tings vat it is, mine dear frient," resumed the count, as he took from his pocket a paper, and proceeded coolly to unfold it. "Dis paper vot I hold in mine hand—but stop a little—I vill light mine pipe first."

Taking from his pocket a pipe and some tobacco, he filled the pipe, lighted it with a match, and after taking a few vigorous puffs continued:

"Dis paper vot I hold in mine hand is a warrant for de arrest of one Gabriel Flint on a charge of being one of a band of counterfeiters. Look at him goot and you vill see dat he is regular. Very vell. Now den, if I should please, I should send for a policeman and have you arrested, and you would go to prison as sure as I smoke dis pipe. Very vell. Now, if you should go to prison, den you must 'left your business behind you, and Mrs. Flint she must get married again, and you must lose everydings, and, besides, vot must become of de aged and indigent widows, eh? You know I couldn't take care of dem all."

Here Flint uttered a groan of agony, and the count blew a dense cloud of smoke from his mouth, after which he continued:

"Very vell. Which is it better dat you go to prison and lose all de business and de widows and everytings, or dat you turns Queen's evidence, and gets clear, eh?"

"What proof have you against me?" asked Flint, as a ray of hope sprang up in his bosom. "I am not a child to be frightened by a shadow. I know nothing of the matter of which you speak, and I defy you!"

"Mine poor frient," returned the count, in a tone of mock sympathy, "I pity you very much, but you are too green for a mans mit gray hairs. Don't you know dat when de ship is sinking everybody vill look out for demselves? Didn't I told you dat I heard about you very mooch? Very vell. I heard about you very mooch from your two best frients, Luke Davis and Lord Mortimer Littleton. Now you see I could make one of dem Queen's evidence, and sent you to prison, but den I thought about de aged and indigent widows, how dey would suffer, and I come to you."

"Ha!" exclaimed Flint, as a look of fury gleamed in his eyes; "have they tried to get the start of me by turning informers? Curse them! I will be even with them! I am your man, Count Gurowski, or whatever your name may be. You may dictate your own terms, and I will abide by them. Ah, they thought to trap the old fox, did they? Curse them! I'll trap them!"

"Ah, now you speak some sensible tings," returned the count, approvingly. "Den de matter is fixed. You vill meet me at dis attorney's office tomorrow morning to make arrangements, and you vill guide de police to de counterfeiters' den when you shall be called upon to do so, eh?"

"Yes," assented Flint, "I'll do it if I die for it!"

"You won't die for it," rejoined the count. "Your frients will all be put where dey can't hurt you, I'll be bound. But now I must tell you dat I don't want to trust you too mooch, and so I shall put a shadow on your track, and de moment you shall attempt any nonsense you shall be arrested, and you vill lose your business and de widows for ever."

"I shall keep faith with you," replied Flint, in a decisive tone. "Never fear me. Revenge is sweet."

"I tinks you vill keep faith," replied the count. "But den I always like to be sure, and so I shall put a shadow on you. Dat will do no harm. And now, if you please, you vill call de boy, Tony."

Flint did as directed, and the next moment Tony stood before them.

"Now, mine boy," said the count, "I shall keep mine promise mit you. Mr. Flint vill double your vages and send you to school. Dat is so, Mr. Flint, eh?"

"Yes," groaned the miserable man, while Tony stood looking on in open-mouthed wonder.

"You see," resumed the count, "Mr. Flint he loaf me so mooch dat he vill anything do for me, and he loaf you too. Don't you see he is so cheerful to something do for you?"

"Yes, I see," replied Tony, with a leer; "he looks very cheerful, but I don't think he could sing the laughing choros just now—that is, he couldn't put in the strong licks."

"Vell, vell, never mind," said the count; "he vill double your vages and send you to school, and dat is all you want."

"Yes," replied Tony, "if he will only keep in that mind."

"Oh, he will keep in dat mind," said the count, confidently; "he loafs me so mooch. And den, you know, if he should change his mind I vill double your vages and send you to school mineself, because I loaf you some too."

"Well, I don't like these fellers that loves on sich a short acquaintance," replied Tony, suspiciously; "I've allers found that 'ere kind of love don't pay good in the long run. And now, if it's a fair question, old puddin' head, wot kind o' p'int are you tryin' to play? Show your hand like a man, and if the thing ain't too rough I'll tackle it, sure—that is, if it ain't anything agin Little Sunshine and her lover. Come, show up, and if I can swallow it I'll do it, for I do want more wages and a little schoolin'."

"It shall not be something rough—its hall be very smooth," returned the count. "I don't want you to do something for me, only be a good boy, and Mr. Flint he don't want you to do something too, only to mind your vork and stick to your book. Mine tear frient, Mr. Flint," he continued, turning to that individual, "vill you please tell de boy yourself, so he shall have his mind easy?"

"It is just as the gentleman says, Tony," remarked Flint, turning to his apprentice; "I have agreed to double your wages and send you to school—so don't say anything more about it, but go to your duty, and rest assured that I will keep my promise."

Tony turned on his heel and left the room, muttering, as he walked along:

"Well, who'd a thunk it? If the sky had fell down I wouldn't ha' been astonished. The idea that old Flint should double my wages and send me to school. Thunder! That's a hummer, that is. What'll Jennie think of it? Why, she won't b'lieve it, that's what. And I won't blame her. I don't b'lieve it myself. Seems to me as if it's all a dream. I wonder if I am awake, anyhow." And to ascertain whether he was in a somnolent or a waking condition Tony struck himself on the side of the head with such force as to bring the tears in his eyes. "I'm awake fast enough," he continued, "there's no doubt about that, and now I reckon that old Gurowski, or whatever his name is, has got some powerful hold on to old Flint, and can make him do just what he pleases. But what does the old fellow want to give me a good send off for, that's what I'd like to know? I don't know the old sucker, and I don't want to. I'm suspicious of him. Maybe he's the old 'un in disguise and wants me to sell myself to him like the feller in the play the other night. I'm a-goin' to keep my eye skinned anyhow, and if he gets the best of Tony Tucker he's keener than I think he is, that's all."

And, entering the workshop, Tony resumed his duties.

CHAPTER XXVI.

IN an isolated and lonely position, on a rise of ground known as Snake Hill, a band of counterfeiters who had flooded the country with spurious money had their headquarters.

The place was admirably adapted to the nefarious trade mentioned, it being entirely out of the line of traffic, and almost unapproachable save that portion of it which skirted the river.

On the other side it could be reached only by a long walk through the marshes—a walk which nobody would ever have thought of taking, unless urged by some matter of very great importance.

It was easy of access from the river, however, and the outlaws who resorted thither never went to or from the place except at night, and then they rowed with muffled oars, so that few were aware that the place was tenanted, and those few neither knew nor cared what kind of people had chosen a residence in so dismal a locality.

An air of mystery surrounded the place, which was heightened by the fact that a rumour had got abroad that the spot was haunted, a fact which in itself would have kept the ignorant and superstitious from going near it at night.

Two days after the events detailed in the last chapter three men were seated in the principal room in the counterfeiters' den, upon whose countenances the deepest anxiety was depicted.

These men were Luke Davis, Lord Mortimer Littleton, and another, to whom the reader has not been previously introduced.

This latter was a rather handsome man, about thirty years of age. That is to say, he would have been thought handsome at a first glance, but an acute judge of character would have detected a look of cunning and cruelty in his steel-blue eyes, as well as an evidence of daring and hardihood in general demeanour.

"I tell you, Luke," said the party last described, "I don't like it at all. Both the girl and her lover are out on bail, and there is no knowing how soon the truth will be wormed out of her that you furnished her with the queer. If the police ever get hold of the fact it will not be long before they will trace the whole matter, and we shall have them thundering at our doors some fine night when we least expect them. I tell you again I don't like it, and I insist that the girl must be lured here forthwith. If she is in our power before she squeals she is safe enough, and we may snap our fingers at all the force of Scotland Yard."

"For the twentieth time I tell you, Jack Haines, that you are unnecessarily alarmed," replied Luke Davis. "I have not had the girl with me since she was a baby without knowing her thoroughly. She would suffer herself to be hung, drawn and quartered before she would break her oath. If I thought she could be induced to peach, by the Heaven above us, I would strangle her as quickly as I would do a rat. However, if you feel uneasy about it it will be the easiest thing in the world to get her here, and then I hope your mind will be at rest."

"Entirely so," rejoined Jack Haines, "and the sooner you get her here the better, for you may put it off too long. Besides, it's so long since I enjoyed female society that I shall be glad to have her with us—particularly as you say she is very handsome. Perhaps I may marry her, and get her to pal with us—who knows?"

"I know," returned Luke Davis, decidedly. "If you have any such idea as that, you may as well dis-

card it at once, for I tell you honestly you have no chance of winning her. Our friend Lord Littleton has made some little effort in that direction, and he will undoubtedly give you the benefit of his experience."

"You can do nothing with her, Jack," said Lord Littleton, in a positive tone. "She's too honest, you know. By Jove, I've tried her once, and I would as soon think of approaching Queen Victoria now—I would, by Jove!"

"Yes, but you are not me," replied Jack Haines, with a glance at himself, in a glass which hung opposite. "I don't wonder that she would have nothing to do with you, but I should wonder greatly if I am unable to make an impression. But I say, Davis, how will you bring her here?"

"The easiest thing in the world," was the reply. "I will write her a letter, stating that I am lying at death's door, very repentant, anxious to do justice to her and others before I die, and all that sort of thing. This I will despatch by our Imp, giving him instructions to guide the girl hither, and she will accompany him without the slightest hesitation."

"Excellent!" exclaimed Jack Haines; "and please set about the matter at once, for I shall not feel safe till she is in our power."

"She shall be with us within four hours," said Luke Davis. "or I am no prophet. By the way, Littleton, I understood you to say that you could not find out who went bail for the pair?"

"No, I could not," replied Littleton. "They were so sly, you know, that I couldn't find out anything about it. I'm sure I don't see why they wished to keep the matter secret, do you?"

"No," rejoined Luke Davis, "and, to tell the truth, I care but little about it. One thing is pretty certain, which is, that whoever he may be he will most likely be obliged to pay the girl's bail for his trouble. But now about bringing her here."

And taking pen, ink, and paper from a table drawer near him Luke Davis proceeded to write to Lily a letter excellently well calculated to bring her to his side. This he folded and sealed, and then struck a call-bell which stood on the table.

The call was answered by a dirty-faced boy about twelve years of age, with curly, unkempt hair and large, staring gray eyes.

Instructing this interesting juvenile how to act, Luke Davis despatched him, with a promise to murder him at sight if he did not succeed in bringing Lily with him, and then sat down to await the result and talk the matter over with his companions in the meantime.

CHAPTER XXVII

WHILE Luke Davis and his guilty companions were plotting the capture of Lily Davis, that young lady and her friend Jennie Brown, were seated in their humble abode, discussing our heroine's unlooked-for liberation from prison and speculating as to the future.

"I can't imagine who could have gone bail for us," said Lily. "I have no friend who is wealthy enough to enter into bonds for us, and even if I had he would not be likely to take such a step without notifying me. It is very strange!"

"I agree with you that it is very strange," assented Jennie, "but I don't think I should bother my head about it if I were in your place. It is enough for you to know that you are innocent and that you are out of that horrid place. It is also evident that whoever bailed you and Ernest is satisfied of your innocence, and will make himself known to you some day."

"Perhaps so," returned Lily, with a sigh; "I hope so, at all events. Heaven bless him, whoever he may be."

"Amen, with all my heart," ejaculated Jennie. But, as I live, here comes Tony!"

And a moment later Tony Tucker, beaming with good nature, stood before them.

"Hullo, girls," he exclaimed, heartily, "how are you both?"

"We are both very well," returned Jennie Brown, with affected displeasure. "I should like to know what takes you away from your business at this hour of the day? You'll be getting yourself into trouble next with your flying about from pillar to post when you ought to be at your work."

"Come, come, Brownie!" returned Tony, with a merry laugh, "you couldn't treat me worse than that if we were married! Why, bless your soul, I haven't seen Lily since she was bailed. The old man sent me down this way on an errand, and on my way back I thought I'd just look in here, that's all! As for gettin' myself in trouble on account of neglectin' my work there ain't much danger o' that."

"Well, I should think there was great danger of it," retorted Jennie, "if I know anything about old Flint, and I think I do."

"That's just it!" exclaimed Tony, eagerly; "I'm

a-going to tell you both something that'll surprise you! You'll think I'm a-dreaming, or crazy, but it's the truth I'm goin' to tell you. You know that old snoozer—that old Dutchman—who called upon you and Ernest Hartley, Lily? Well, he paid a visit to old Flint at the shop. I was the first one to see him, and I felt like punchin' his head, for I didn't believe in him. We had a little talk together, and, in the course of it, he said he rather liked me, and that he was going to get old Flint to double my wages, and send me to school. Of course I only laughed at this, and didn't think any more about it; but, as sure as you live, he kept his word. Old Flint has doubled my pay, and I'm goin' to school every afternoon! What do you think of that? The first thing, you know, I'll be patterin' German and French, and puttin' on loud airs! Only think of it! I'm spellin' words of two syllables already! B-a, ba, b-y, baby! How is that, for a fellow that thinks about gettin' married one of these days?"

"I believe you are crazy, Tony, that's a fact!" exclaimed Jennie Brown, blushing, "and if you can't talk more sensibly you had better be off to your work at once!"

"It's nothing but the truth," replied Tony, "crazy or not crazy. Who'd he thought it of that old snoker? However, I ain't got time to stay any longer, so good-bye, girls, and allow me to give you a free-and-easy sentiment. 'On your journey up the hill of prosperity may you never meet a friend!' Because if you should meet a friend he'd be coming down—don't you see? Good-bye!"

And Tony was about taking his departure as suddenly as he had entered, when Lily stopped him.

"Stay a moment, Tony," she said, "is it quite true what you have told us, and are you very sure it was the same old gentleman who called upon us in the prison, that visited Mr. Flint?"

"Sure of it?" replied Tony, in a tone of astonishment—"sure of it? Am I sure that this 'ere right duke belongs to me?" Here he doubled up his right fist. "Am I sure that little Brownie there is the sweetest and best little gal atop o' the earth, and that I can warm any kid o' my size and weight that says she ain't? Sure of it? I tell you there ain't no doubt about it! Why, I could pick that old rooster out of a thousand all blacked up for nigger minstrels."

"It is very strange!" exclaimed Lily, musingly; and then, looking at Jennie, she continued: "The idea has just taken possession of me, Jennie—I know not why—that it was that same strange gentleman that was our bail."

"Perhaps it was," assented Jennie; "but what could have been his motive?"

"I am sure I cannot imagine," returned Lily. "I can't imagine why he's shavin' around here anyhow!" broke in Tony. "But if he attempts to play any p'ints on me or my friends he'll get his head in chancery, sure! But once more, girls, good-bye!" and Tony was off like a shot.

Hardly had he disappeared when Ernest Hartley, his face radiant with smiles, entered, and, grasping Lily's hands, while he exchanged a friendly nod with Jennie, exclaimed:

"Give me joy, Lily! I have such excellent news to tell you! It seems so glorious after the terrible ordeal through which I have passed! Would you believe it? My employers, who cast me off when this great trouble came upon us, and refused to grant me an interview, have not only restored me to my position, with many apologies for having suspected me, but have doubled my salary as well!"

"Of course, somebody must have interceded in your behalf," replied Lily, as she returned her lover's embrace. "Who is it? Do you know?"

"I do know," returned Hartley; "and you will be surprised when I tell you that it was the same old gentleman who visited us in prison."

"Not much surprised," rejoined Lily, with a smile, "for Tony has just left here, and he has told us that the same person interceded in his behalf, and with the same result as in your case. Who can he be, and what interest can he have in us personally?"

"That I am, at a loss to conjecture," replied her lover, with a puzzled expression; "but for some reason he is deeply interested in us. Of this I am certain, for he not only interested himself in my behalf as I have stated, but he has requested me to meet him at an attorney's office this morning to discuss a very important project, in which I am to take an active part."

"And what project can that possibly be?" asked Lily, in a tone of wonder.

"Ah! that I cannot tell even to you, darling," answered Hartley, "for I am pledged to the closest secrecy. I can only go so far as to assure you that it is a movement which interests us both deeply, and on the successful completion of which our acquittal of the false charge which has been made against us, in a great measure depends. And, by the way, I have no further time to spend with you at present, for I have much to do before I can keep my appoint-

ment. I should not have called upon at all, in fact, if I had not been anxious to make you aware of my good fortune. So, farewell, pet, till we meet again!" And in another moment the two girls were alone again.

(To be continued.)

LADY CHETWYND'S SPECTRE.

CHAPTER LI.

WHILE Gilbert and Sylvia Monk, in the boudoir of the latter, had been arriving at some sort of mutual understanding in regard to Bernice Lord Chetwynd, Mr. Tempest and Bisset, the detective officer, had been pursuing their object of searching the unused attics of the great house.

They had gone from room to room, with their candles held high above their heads, examining every nook and corner, and finding only bare walls and dusty floors.

At last, in the very last room they visited, they came upon the ladder which Bernice had left leaning against the trap-door of the low upper garret which she had made her haunt.

Bisset's eyes gleamed as he beheld the ladder. He sprang forward and climbed up the rounds like a cat, into the upper garret.

Something in his manner infected Chetwynd and Tempest with like energy. They came after him up the ladder into the upper room.

It was only a low garret, barely six feet high in its highest part, without windows—a mere den-lighted and ventilated through seams and crevices in the slated roof.

And yet it was seen at the first glance to have been the haunt of a human being.

There were a mattress in a corner, a pillow, and blankets.

A bit of broken mirror was affixed to a rough-hewn post.

There were a few toilet appurtenances that had evidently been brought up from a guest-chamber below.

Bisset flashed his light to and fro high above his head, and darted his inquisitive glances hither and thither.

The gleam of something white—a mere roll or bundle—behind a beam overhead caught his eyes. He caught at it and pulled it down.

It unrolled, and its silken length fell upon the floor.

The three gentlemen stared at it for a full minute in silence.

"That is the robe my wife was buried in!" said Lord Chetwynd, in a strange voice. "I should know it anywhere. And it is the dress worn by the spectre. Look at the sleeve!"

Bisset lifted into plain view the small elbow sleeve, with its frill of rare point lace. Part of the lace had been forcibly torn out.

The officer produced the fragment of lace which Lord Chetwynd had given him, and fitted it to the original frill.

The fact was apparent at a glance. The fragment had been torn from that very frill.

Again the three were silent, looking at each other and at the dress.

Mr. Tempest was the first to speak.

"We have proved conclusively," he said, "that the Chetwynd spectre is a living woman, and that she has lived in this room for days, perhaps weeks. Some one of the household may or may not be in her confidence and supply her with food. It is clear also that the woman, for purposes of her own, chooses to pass herself off as a ghost. Now what is her object?"

"That question will have to wait for an answer, sir," said Bisset. "There are other questions to be considered first. For instance, this singular hallucination of my lord, that this dress was actually worn by the late Lady Chetwynd in her coffin. Do you really mean, my lord, that this is the identical dress worn by her ladyship in her tomb?"

"It looks the same," said Chetwynd. "Of course it cannot be the same, and yet I remember this dress well. Lady Chetwynd wore it the evening of her arrival home. She looked so lovely in it that I remarked it particularly, and in her girlish pleasure she called my attention to the pattern of the lace and other points."

"Was there anything else besides the pattern of the lace by which your lordship might identify it?" said the officer.

"No—yes. Upon the evening after our dinner party as Lady Chetwynd and I stood in her boudoir," replied the marquis, "the ornaments upon my watch chain became entangled in the lace on the inner side of her sleeve. Our attempts to detach the ornaments resulted in a rent in the lace, an odd little zigzag rent, which I find, Lady Chetwynd's French maid, repaired the next day. I have never thought of the incident since, until now your question recalls it."

"We can soon prove then if this be her ladyship's dress," said Bisset. "Look!"

He displayed the inner side of both sleeves. Lord Chetwynd examined both, and uttered a strange cry, starting back.

He had found the little rent he had described, but so carefully darned as to be imperceptible save to the closest scrutiny.

Bisset and Mr. Tempest examined it narrowly. "This is incredible," said the explorer, in sudden agitation. "Are we to understand that this is actually and truly Lady Chetwynd's burial robe?"

"It is proved by his lordship to have been Lady Chetwynd's robe, worn on her first evening in this house," said Bisset. "But it is not yet proved to have been the dress in which she was buried."

"But it is the same," declared the marquis—"the very same. She was buried in this gown—I'll swear to it. She looked in her coffin like a bride. She had no other white silk dress out square in the neck and with sleeves like those."

"Very well," said Bisset. "Your lordship has proved conclusively that this dress belonged to Lady Chetwynd. Your lordship also believes this dress to have been her ladyship's burial robe. You will be shocked, my lord, at my next proposal, but a moment's reflection will assure you of its propriety. I desire, in your lordship's presence and the presence of your distinguished guest, Mr. Tempest, to open Lady Chetwynd's coffin."

"No, no," said Chetwynd, brokenly. "I may have been mistaken in some way after all. Of course my wife could not have been buried in this robe and it be here."

"But why of course, my lord?" demanded Bisset. "I tell you, sir, you are standing upon the threshold of a mystery so deep that I dare not as yet declare to you my suspicions. Have you never heard of people being buried in trances? Have you never heard of cases of suspended animation?"

"It is not possible," cried Tempest, in an agony. "How can it be? She was not buried for six days."

"There are well-authenticated instances where animation was suspended for a week, or even so long as ten days," declared Bisset, calmly.

"But she was dead, I tell you," said Lord Chetwynd, brokenly. "Ah, there was no mistake in that fact. She knew that she was dying. She bade me good-bye. And when she had died her eyes became sunken, and the look that the dead have mantled her face. There was a strange blueness about the poor, pinched face—"

Bisset started eagerly.

"A blueness, my lord?" he ejaculated. "For Heaven's sake, go on. Did this blueness settle most heavily under the eyes and about the mouth?"

"Yes, yes. It changed her, giving her a ghastliness that haunts me still."

Bisset communed with himself for some moments. Evidently Chetwynd's words had produced a vivid impression upon him.

At last he spoke:

"My lord, I believe that Lady Chetwynd lives, that she has in some way been resuscitated. I believe that it was your own wife you have seen so repeatedly, my lord. I believe that Lady Chetwynd's spectre in Lady Chetwynd's living self!"

CHAPTER LIII.

BISSET gathered the silken robe, all stained and frayed and yellowed and wrinkled as it was, across his arm, and led the way from the attics to the lower floor. Upon the third floor they halted to listen.

"We must be on our guard," said Bisset, in a whisper. "I do not wish Mr. or Miss Monk to become aware of our proceedings. It is well to be as secret as possible in a case like this."

The three men moved cautiously toward the stair.

As they halted a moment near the landing, listening, Gilbert Monk's head appeared above the level of the floor as Monk came up the stair, as heretofore described.

We have said that Monk was struck, at the first glance, by the countenances of the three men whom he thus met face to face, and that he stood aghast at sight of the burden one of the three men bore.

That burden was the silk dress in which Bernice had so successfully played the part of spectre, and it was still hung across the arm of the detective officer.

Monk stared speechless. He comprehended the scene at a glance.

He had not calculated that the robe of Bernice would be found, yet in his amazement his desperate courage did not forsake him.

"Ha, what have you there?" he asked, finding his voice under the keen scrutiny of Mr. Bisset. "The spectre's dress, I'll risk a guinea. Have you found the spectre herself in propria persona?"

"No, Gilbert," said Lord Chetwynd; "but we

have found evidence that the mysterious girl, whoever she may be, has inhabited an attic in this house for days and weeks."

"Indeed," said Monk, coolly. "I shouldn't have slept so soundly of nights if I had suspected that. For, to tell the truth, I fancy the creature is demoted."

"We have made other discoveries also, Mr. Monk," said Bisset, eyeing Monk sharply. "We found footprints in the dust of the attic floor. I measured them, and have come to some valuable conclusions. We shall see what we shall see. But permit us now to pass, Mr. Monk."

Monk bowed courteously, and stood aside until the three gentlemen had reached the floor next lower.

He then followed them. Arrived upon the chamber floor, Lord Chetwynd took the silken robe from Bisset and carried it into the dressing-room. Lady Chetwynd had occupied, and locked it in an armiro.

He returned to the hall, where Tempest and Bisset awaited him, and Monk with them.

His lordship glanced from Bisset to Monk, who saw that some further movement was on foot, and was determined to engage in it.

"I presume your investigations are not yet ended," said Monk, in his boyish way. "Is anything more in contemplation? If so let me help also. Four are better than three. It is not like Chetwynd to count me out when I would do anything to serve him."

Chetwynd was touched by the implied reproach.

Frank and honest himself he believed Monk the same.

He trusted in him, and entertained a species of affection for him.

"It is true, Gilbert, that we have another movement on foot," he said. "Mr. Bisset thinks that we ought to investigate my poor wife's coffin. We are going to do so now."

Monk did not change colour.

He had scarcely expected that an investigation would actually be made of Lady Chetwynd's burial casket, but he was prepared for that investigation. Bisset marked that not a muscle quivered in that boyish, bearded face, that the small black eyes did not blink, and that the smart face did not change in its expression of curiosity and surprise.

Some ten minutes later, dressed in morning costume, the four met in the library.

Chetwynd opened his safe and produced the key of the Chetwynd family vault, also the key of the door at the head of the stairs leading down into the crypt.

"We must get the key of the church of the rector," said the marquis. "I have here under my cloak a lantern and a few tools which we shall require. Are you ready?"

Assent was given, and Chetwynd led the way out of the house by the main entrance. The hall porter had long since quitted his post. The lights were out, the household in bed.

Chetwynd put a latch key in his pocket, closed the door securely, and led the way across the lawn into the park.

Lord Chetwynd strode on in advance, eager, impatient, tortured.

They entered the silent, straggling streets of the village.

The houses were dark, the shops long since closed. The hour was somewhat past one in the morning.

They walked swiftly and in silence up the entire street to Chetwynd parish church.

The gate was unlocked, and Monk led the way in among the graves.

"Wait for me in the porch," said Chetwynd. "I am going to arouse the rector and obtain the key of the church."

The rectory adjoined the church.

Chetwynd ascended the rectory steps and knocked loudly upon the door.

He was obliged to repeat the summons again and again, but at last the rector's night-capped head was protruded from an upper window, and the rector's voice demanded what was wanted.

"It is I—Chetwynd!" said the marquis, in a cautious, penetrating voice. "I beg you to come down, Mr. Locke. I am on business of the utmost importance."

There was a brief interval of silence. Then steps were heard on the stairs within, bolts and chains were rattled inside the door, which presently opened, and the good rector of Chetwynd parish church stood on the threshold.

"Come in, my lord," he exclaimed. "Has anything happened? In any one ill? It—it is not the ghost that has brought you here at this hour?"

"No, I want the key of the church," said Chetwynd. "Mr. Locke, I am going to open my wife's coffin."

The clergyman uttered an exclamation of astonishment. Evidently he thought Chetwynd's brain was turned.

"I have excellent reasons for my course, and I have friends with me," said the marquis, impatiently. "You think me sacrilegious, Mr. Locke. You do not know the doubts that are rising within me of Bernice's actual death. The spectre of Chetwynd may be my living wife—no, no, that is impossible. And yet—Give me the key—the key!"

Mr. Locke regarded his visitor in alarm.

"The poor boy has gone mad," he thought. "I thought this would be the upshot when he declared that he had seen Lady Chetwynd's spectre. Poor boy! Poor Miss Monk!"

Chetwynd seemed to comprehend his thoughts.

"I am not mad," he said, although I wonder that I am not. This key—the key!"

The sound of voices from the church steps at this juncture reached the clergyman's ears. He drew a breath of relief.

"Yes, my lord," he replied hastily. "I'll get the key. I'll go with you too, if my presence will be agreeable to you. I don't understand a word you've said, but I'll join you in your proposed investigation."

He hastily retired, returning fully dressed, and with the key of the church in his hand.

He accompanied Chetwynd to the church, and was somewhat reassured to meet Monk, whom he knew, Mr. Tempest of whom, like all England, he had heard, and Mr. Bisset, whom Chetwynd introduced in his real character as a detective officer.

The church was opened, and the five gentlemen gave themselves admittance and proceeded down to the Chetwynd burial vault.

The lantern was suspended from a nail in a beam overhead.

Then Bisset went to work. He took possession of the tools Monk Chetwynd had brought, but first of all he surveyed the coffin on every side, to ascertain if it had at any period since Lady Chetwynd's burial been tampered with.

In all appearance it had not been touched.

It stood upon trundles, and was covered with black crepe, upon which the silver plate and handles, all tarnished now, gleamed with subdued lustre.

Bisset read the inscription on the plate. Then he set to work to unfasten the screws. Tempest, seizing a screw-driver, set to work upon the opposite side of the casket. Lord Chetwynd stood apart, his arms folded, his head sunk low on his breast. Monk and the clergyman conversed in whispers.

The lid of the coffin was unsecured and removed, and now all but Chetwynd gathered around to look into the casket.

Bisset uttered a low exclamation unintelligible to all save Monk, who put up his hand to his mouth to hide a smile of triumph.

The coffin was not empty! Within it lay the skeleton of a woman!

The skull was bare of flesh; the long black hair had grown like some wild weed and filled the upper half of the casket; and the fleshless hands and delicate fingers, mere bones now, still hung together as if strung on wire.

But, strangest of all, the fleshless skeleton was mostly covered by a long robe of white silk trimmed with point lace, and cut square in the neck, with elbow sleeves edged with frills of lace. The silk was stained and yellow, as if it had lain there all these months, but was still in a good state of preservation.

Monk, not satisfied with the precautions he had, before taken, had caused a dress to be made a counterpart of Bernice's burial robe, had stained it, purposely to make it look old and decaying, and had recently placed it here in anticipation of this moment.

And now his heart throbbed with his sinister joy at his success.

Lord Chetwynd came forward and also looked into the coffin.

The others drew back respectfully.

There were no tears in his eyes, but his face was convulsed with his awful anguish. His old wound was ploughed up afresh, and the pain was almost more than he could bear.

He looked a long time in silence. Then he said, brokenly:

"The body of my wife lies here. This is her dress. See; the lace is the same—no, not the same, yet very like it. We have deceived ourselves."

He stepped back with arms still folded, his head sinking again to his breast.

In silence the lid was restored to the coffin and screwed in its place. The old clergyman approached Chetwynd and took his hand, but he had nothing to say in such a moment and to a despair like this.

And in silence the five gentlemen returned to the church porch. Mr. Locke took his key and went home. The others returned to Chetwynd Park.

"So far Monk is ahead," thought the baffled detective, as he retired to his bed. "He's crafty. It's likely to be a tough fight between us—a contest of wits—but I'm not worried yet, and I'll come out ahead in the end. And the end is near!"

(To be continued.)



[MYRA INTRODUCES A VISITOR TO MRS. BARKER.]

MYRA.

"I must know her!"

Erle Wesson checked his horse abruptly, and, allowing him to walk, gazed wistfully upon the graceful figure that flitted on before him, hardly seeming to touch the ground, so easy were her movements.

"If she would but turn, that I might see her face," he whispered again, in a voice not free from awe. "And yet I am sure she is beautiful or lovely or good. There must be something to attract me thus—some sweet influence in her soul that will shine out upon me from her features when I see them."

He sighed softly, his dark eyes still fixed upon the girl who had, by her presence alone, aroused such strange emotions in his breast.

She was not dressed elegantly; there was nothing extraordinary in her appearance, nothing about her to excite admiration, save the glorious contour of her form as revealed by her sylph-like motion.

Erle Wesson was not a boy to be swayed by a mere fancy, not one who sought out new acquaintances among the gentler sex for the sake of novelty or number.

No, he was a man familiar with sorrow and care, experienced in the ways of the world, and devoid of frivolity.

Now the maiden paused before a little white cottage, and, opening the gate, walked up the well-kept path, but without turning her head. Indeed, it seemed as if she took especial care to keep her features from view.

Hoping that when she opened the door he would obtain a glimpse of her face, he gazed upon her steadily, but in vain.

She entered, leaving the door open, and shut it when secure from his yearning eyes.

"Have I followed her far? Have I annoyed her? Does she deem me impertinent?"

The questions followed each other in rapid succession, and a frown wrinkled his brow.

Then, smiling at his folly in allowing these unreasonable conjectures expression, he glanced once at the house and surroundings, to fix it in his memory, and galloped away.

Reaching the unpretentious tavern, a mile distant, he gave his steed in charge of the hostler, and entered the house.

Sitting down by one of the office windows, he lit a cigar, and gazed out upon the green fields brilliant with sunshine.

Presently the landlord came in, and, with an affable smile, bade his guest good-morning for at least the third time, adding:

"Rather a pretty place, our little town, don't you think so, sir?"

"Yes, very," answered Erle, carelessly. "By the way, can you tell me who lives in the snug white cottage with trellised porch, about a mile below here? There is a little garden on the right, looking from the road, and a smooth grass plot on the left."

"Oh, yes, sir, yes, indeed—a neat little place, to be sure," said the landlord, volubly. "Old Mrs. Barker lives there—a remarkable woman, sir—over sixty-five, and never had a spectacle across her nose yet, and hasn't missed going to church once in fifteen years, rain or shine. Few like her, I can tell you, sir."

"I should think so. But she doesn't live there all alone?"

"Oh, bless you, sir, no. She has a girl to do her work, and a man to take care of things outside. The old lady keeps a cow and a horse in Rundlet's barn just across the way. Sometimes she has visitors—her son comes down from London now and then, with his family, and then again a young girl spends a week or two with her in the summer. I've seen the girl often, but I never heard her name as I know of; the old lady never says much about her."

And the landlord paused to fill his pipe.

Erle nodded, and turned his eyes towards the window again.

He had learned positively nothing, and how to obtain an introduction to the maiden was a problem that seemed incapable of solution.

A stranger, travelling merely for the sake of travel, he had not even ordinary methods at his command.

But he must, he would know her, if he had to spend the rest of his life there.

"That resolution is foolish enough," he thought, starting up to leave the room. "She may leave at any time—perhaps to-night or to-morrow. I must act quickly, if at all, and yet what can I do that will not savour of boldness?"

The day passed, and just as the sun sank to rest Erle left the tavern, determined to walk by the house of the fair unknown, thinking that he might perchance obtain a glimpse of her.

Impelled by his singular desire, he hurried on, and as he came near the cottage he saw that the chamber windows on the wing were wide open.

His heart beat restlessly—even the thought of beholding her weakened his self-control. Why was it?

As he came opposite the window he raised his eyes shyly, and at that instant something fluttered from the sill, and, borne by the evening breeze, fell at his feet.

Stooping, he picked it up, and saw that it was a fine lace handkerchief, with M. R. worked elaborately in one corner.

Again he looked up, hope reflected from his features.

Between the white drapery curtains he saw a mild, placid face, illumined by deep, brown eyes, and shaded by masses of wavy chestnut hair. One fair hand resting upon the sill, and the other partially raised, gave to her attitude a charming effect.

How long had he looked upon her? His eyes were feeding his soul with love. He knew not. But he managed to speak at last, though his voice was unsteady:

"This is yours?"

"Thanks. Yes."

The sweet, rippling tones echoed again and again on his ear. The next minute the door opened, and the maiden appeared; but her face was crimson now, the long lashes drooped—perhaps she was thinking how long she had stood at the window.

Erle hastened to meet her, but, somewhat confused, he pulled the gate toward him, and pulled, and might have pulled unto this day had not the maiden come forward, and, smiling in spite of herself, quietly opened the refractory portal.

Red to the temples, and deeply mortified, Erle advanced a step to return the handkerchief, but it was not to be seen. Annoyed and perplexed, he glanced hastily around him, and then bit his lip with vexation. What did it mean?

"You put it in your pocket, sir, when you were trying to open the gate," said the girl, her brown eyes sparkling with merriment.

Erle's face became scarlet.

"How stupid! I wonder where my senses were. I really beg your pardon," he stammered, feeling deeply humiliated.

She received the bit of lace with a courteous bow, and, murmuring her thanks, started to return to the house. But the interview must not end this way; fortune would not fly in his face twice; he must improve this opportunity, or never think of her again.

Impulsively he said:

"I was about to call on your grandmother."

And then he paused, quite sure that he had made a terrible faux pas. Did ever man blunder so before? Was he really insane, or had he been an idiot all his life without knowing it? Hadn't he heard that Mrs. Barker had but one son, and he a young man?

The girl halted abruptly, and gazed upon him in mingled astonishment and indignation; but this lasted only an instant, and then sadness clouded her features.

"How did you know of the relation I bear to Mrs. Barker?" she queried, in a subdued voice.

"Pardon me, I didn't know it; the words were accidental, I assure you," he replied, feeling somewhat relieved.

She regarded him searchingly a moment, and then intimated somewhat reservedly that Mrs. Barker would be pleased to see him. He followed her into the house in silence, his spirits dampened by the sudden change in her manner. Was it a secret, this relationship? Why should it be? He severed his reflection, for his fair conductor was about to show him into the sitting-room. What should he say to the old lady—what excuse could he offer for intruding upon her? He had got himself into a fine snarl of circumstances. But he was cool now, and relied upon his wit to extricate him. Passing his card to the maiden, he requested her to introduce him. She said nothing, but there was wonder in her eyes.

"Mrs. Barker, this is Mr. Wesson, a stranger, who honours us with a call."

"Sarcastic enough to begin with," thought Erle, and, not in the least disconcerted, bowed courteously to the bright-faced old lady, and said, earnestly:

"I am aware, madam, of the peculiar position in which I stand, and that, perhaps with justice, I may be esteemed bold, but my apology is the memory of a beloved mother now passed beyond. This morning I was told of your ripe age, your remarkable health, and your very devotional life, and I thought to myself, here is one who will allow me, a stranger, to draw some happiness from her presence. Though motherless myself, I can still be thankful for those who have this inestimable blessing, and when I look at you I am glad for your son."

Beginning formally, Erle unconsciously grew serious and pathetic, and when he concluded his voice trembled. For the moment he forgot all but the faded past.

"I am glad you've come," said Mrs. Barker, much affected by his words. "I am sure you are a good man; you've an honest face, and your heart must be true, for you loved your mother. I can always tell by that. Myra dear, ask Nancy to set an extra plate; the gentleman will take tea with us, I'm sure."

"As great a pleasure as it would be I must decline. I have already trespassed upon your kindness," said Erle, rising.

The old lady regretted his decision, and made him promise to call again, which he was nothing loth to do.

Myra showed him to the door. He must speak to her, and yet he knew not what to say.

The very purity of his emotions restrained his tongue.

Unconsciously he had been warmly gazing upon her for nearly a full minute, and now she retreated a step, her face flushing deeply.

"Have I offended you again?" he said, quickly. "I am so unfortunate in this respect I shall hardly dare to call again. And yet I must."

The last clause escaped his lips involuntarily. Myra hastened to take advantage of it.

"Must? Then 'twere useless to argue the question whether you dare. Good-night, Mr. Wesson."

A slight smile, a sparkle of her brilliant eyes—that was all.

Then the door closed, and he was alone upon the step.

He had seen her, had been invited to come again—he was grateful to fickle fortune for so much, and yet he were more or less than human had he not some fault to find—luckily it was with himself.

He confidently whispered to his inner self that he was foolish for allowing his mind to become captive to her as well as his heart.

Perhaps he was; it isn't safe to discuss the point.

The next day he went to Manchester and amused himself as well as he could looking through the extensive cotton mills.

He knew very well that he could not remain in Wardley without lingering near Myra's house, and he hardly wished to draw the eyes of the village upon him.

Returning on the following day, he hired a pair of horses and a vehicle, and, driving down to Mrs. Barker's, requested the old lady and Myra to ride with him.

It was a popular way of conducting a courtship, but he had no choice.

Mrs. Barker was somewhat surprised at this demonstration ostensibly in her favour, but she smiled in a significant way and consented.

Myra offered no objections, and presently Erle was driving through the main street with the two ladies in the carriage.

It would hardly be fair to expose his thoughts; sufficient it was that Myra was near him; he was thankful for so much.

Mrs. Barker selected the route, and at length surprised her new friend by saying as they approached a yellow country house:

"I'll stop here, Mr. Wesson, if you please. I promised to spend the afternoon with Mrs. Greeley some time ago and this is a good chance. Myra dear, will you go in or ride with Mr. Wesson until he calls for me?"

There was a moment of painful suspense.

Erle's heart beat very rapidly, and, fearing that she would accept the first proposition, he turned around and with a pleading glance at Myra said:

"You should instruct her to remain with me, Mrs. Barker, since you insist upon leaving. My loneliness ought to be considered, ought it not, Miss Myra?"

"That is a compound question, sir," replied Myra, roughly. "But as grandma always lets me do as I please I shall decide. If she will not make a long stay I will ride, for the afternoon is beautiful."

Erle smiled his thanks and reined up to the door.

Passing the ribbons to Myra, he alighted and assisted Mrs. Barker from the carriage.

Requesting him to return for her in an hour, the old lady nodded her adieu and entered the house.

Regaining the carriage, Erle inquired if Myra had any choice of roads.

Yes, she had, so he turned round and drove northward.

Presently Erle allowed the horses to walk, and then, changing his position so as to face his companion, referred poetically to the glories of nature.

Myra listened with interest, and presently they were engaged in a very earnest conversation.

Anon the girl's cheeks glowed, and her eyes dilated, as Erle became more tender and eloquent.

He could charm any one with his rich ideas when the mood was on him, and now he surpassed himself, and his enthusiasm lent a new beauty to his face.

"It seems as if I had known you a very long time while I hear you speak," said Myra, meditatively, and unconscious of the ambiguity of her words.

"That was my feeling when I first saw you even before I beheld your features," replied Erle, with an ardent glance.

She dropped her eyes suddenly, her cheeks burnt red.

For a few moments she was silent, and her companion dared not speak.

"I meant that you seemed like a friend of mine," she said, at length, toying with her bracelet.

"I would not only seem like a friend," he answered, purposely misconstruing her words. "But, oh, Myra, I would be esteemed such by you."

"You misunderstand me again, Mr. Wesson," she replied, averting her head.

"Am I then so dull? At all events it will be happiness to have you to teach me. Measure my words and I will repeat them."

"Rather measure them yourself before you speak them," she rejoined, curtly.

It was a cold rebuff, and significant too. Further, it seemed an insurmountable obstacle to any conversation of that nature.

Erle sighed deeply and bent his head forward. An interval of oppressive silence followed.

"Oh, Mr. Wesson, let us go home! Turn quickly, I beseech you!"

Startled by her vehement words, he glanced hastily around.

Her face was ghastly, her brown eyes were distended with fear.

"Are you ill? Oh, Myra, what is it?"

His heart leaped into his voice, he gazed upon her anxiously.

"Nothing, nothing, only let us go back," she replied, locking her hands together and striving to be calm. "I am quite well; but drive fast, please, I love to drive fast."

She sank back upon the seat, breathing heavily, and closed her eyes.

As Erle turned the horses he saw a man crouching in the bushes near the roadside. Had this caused Myra's terror? How could it? Here was a new and painful subject for conjecture. Had he in pursuing his love come upon a mystery?

And while he was thinking the horses were moving at a sharp trot, and before he was aware of it Mrs. Barker's house was reached.

Glancing timidly up at the rear window, Myra said she would alight. Erle sprang out to help her, and as he took her hand he felt that it was cold. He gazed upon her in mingled affection and solicitude.

"I have had a splendid ride," she said, with an effort at cheerfulness. "I thank you very much. You will go after Mrs. Barker now I suppose? Well, good-bye."

"Well, good-bye." How many times had Erle Wesson repeated those words in the last two months! How often in daylight and darkness had he seen that sweet face grow sad just for an instant, and thought how yearningly he had watched her as she glided into the house.

He had brought the old lady back to her house, and then in the evening he called at the house, but all was dark and no one answered his summons.

The day following he went again to the little white cottage, and Mrs. Barker told him that Myra had gone.

Gone where? The old lady could not tell him; and since then he had neither seen nor heard of the girl who in one brief moment had become as dear to him as life.

"It ended as strangely as it began," he mused, walking the floor with his arms folded across his chest. "I should have looked upon it as a dream, and thus avoided some of this misery. Where is she? Why did she leave Wardley so suddenly? Why did not I learn her full name when I could? Myra—that is all—the only clue, and that is worthless. Myra! the name I loved—it mocks me now."

He dropped into a chair and rested his head upon his hand.

Visions of what might have been flitted spectre-like before him and racked his heart with grief.

Hastily arising, he took his hat and descended to the street.

As he was passing out the landlord handed him a letter.

Erle broke the seal and began its perusal. It read as follows:

"MY DEAR WESSON,—I direct this to London hoping you may get it in season. We have a select party of friends at the old house, and I want, nay command, you to join us at once. I can't write much, for there are a half-dozen blooming maidens around me, teasing my life away, and among them my promised wife—the dearest girl you ever saw. Come, come, I'll never forgive you if you disappoint me. Your Friend, AYLMER CHAUNCEY."

"I'll go. I must have diversion. This melancholy is wearing on my nerves."

Erle Wesson's hand was warmly grasped by Aylmer Chauncey when they met at the station, and words of earnest welcome for an instant lifted the cloud from his heart.

All the way to the grand old mansion Chauncey entertained his friend with pleasing anecdotes, and when at last the house was reached Erle sprang from the carriage with something of his former animation, and greeted his friend's parents with gladness in his eye and voice. For a moment his phantom had left him.

Having spent an hour in his chamber and changed his apparel, he descended to the sitting-room and was introduced to the guests—as beautiful and noble a group as ever assembled under one roof.

In the evening a grateful surprise awaited him, a party was to be given in honour of his coming; the guests were already assembling, and Erle must hurry down, Chauncey said, looking into his room for an instant.

Hastening to complete his toilet, Erle hurried to the drawing-room, lingered there a short time to receive the greetings of the company, and then escaped to the conservatory for a few moments' relief from the excitement.

As he entered the apartment devoted to rare exotics he paused abruptly, and a wild thrill went through his heart. The voices of the birds seemed changed to heavenly music, the odour of the sweet shrubs lent intoxication to his senses.

He raised his hand as if in wonder. Yes, it was true! She was there before him, her beautiful face alternately paling and flushing. She? Who? A flood of joy went over his heart and then—

"Myra! Oh, Myra! We meet again!"

"Yes, Mr. Wesson," came the answer, in a low, unsteady voice.

Try as she would she could not wholly control herself, and the fact mortified her.

"Myra, I have not known peace since I left you that night. I must speak now lest you vanish again as suddenly as before."

He took her hands tenderly within his own.

"Myra, I love you, I cannot live without you. Oh, dearest, you will not deny me, you will not rob me of the blessing I crave?"

"I—I—oh, Erle, what is that?"

Each accent revealed terror—she turned and caught her lover by the arm.

At the same instant the dark, forbidding face that had been gazing vindictively upon them appeared above the plants, then the man sprang towards Erle, a wide knife gleaming in his hand. But as he took another step a trailing vine caught his foot, and he fell heavily, burying the blade in his own breast.

Once Myra glanced upon the recumbent, bleeding form, and then with a low shriek of horror she fell senseless in Erle's arms.

Two days had passed.

The terrible tragedy had been kept as quiet as possible, but wonder had not yet ceased, for the body of the involuntary suicide had been mysteriously removed; none knew whither nor by whom.

Myra had remained in her room, accessible to no one but Aylmer Chauncey's sister, and she reported her as being restless and feverish.

The third day of her seclusion Erle begged to see her, and finally she granted his wish.

He started as he beheld her—her face was pallid, her eyes shone with a weird sorrow.

"Sit down," she said, quietly. "You asked me to marry you, but you will retract the words when I tell you all that I may."

"Oh, Myra, you know not my heart else you would not speak so. Nothing can force me to give you up, you are my very life. Say on, darling, but remember my love, and draw comfort from it if it is pleasant to you."

"It is my hope, Erle, my hope of future bliss. But let me on, my confession will torture me, I would hurry through it." She locked her hands in her lap. "Five years ago my dear parents were happy, but suddenly my father fell from his manhood, and, deserting us, plunged into the worst dissipation, led on by one whose delight was to ruin homes. We prayed with him and for him, mother and I, but without avail, and at last when his fortune was gone he threatened mother if she would

not let him draw upon her. Then we felt it our duty to leave him, and mother immured herself in Wardley at the house of Mrs. Greeley. Since then we have lived in fear—you know how it culminated! My poor father died in this house three days ago. But I think Heaven will forgive him. Now do you want me, Erle?"

"Yes, my own, my dearest, I want to make you happy, to reward you for your sorrow."

And he did most nobly.

G. W. S.

THE WEDDING FINGER.

THERE are few objects among the productions of art contemplated with such lively interest by ladies after a certain age as the wedding ring; this has been the theme for poets of every calibre, for geniuses of every wing, from the dabbling duckling to the soaring eagle.

The mouldy antiquary can tell the origin of the custom with which it is connected; and perchance why a ring is round, and account for many circumstances concerning the ceremony of the circle, on the most conclusive evidence, amounting to absolute conjectural demonstration, but amidst all that has been said and written in reference to the ring we believe the more lovely part engaged in the mystic matter, the taper residence of this ornament, has been neglected.

Now this is rather curious, as there are facts which belong to the ring finger which render it in a peculiar manner an appropriate emblem of matrimonial union. It is the only finger where two principal nerves belong to two distinct trunks; the thumb is supplied with its principal nerves from the radial nerve, as are also the fore finger, the middle finger, and the thumb side of the ring finger, at the point or extremity of which a real union takes place. It seems as if it were intended by nature to be the matrimonial finger.

That the side of the ring finger next the little finger is supplied by the ulnar nerve is frequently proved by a common accident, that of striking the elbow against the edge of a chair, a door, or any narrow hard substance; the ulnar nerve is then frequently struck, and a thrilling sensation is felt in the little finger, and on the same side of the ring finger, but not on the other side of it.

THE PHILADELPHIA EXHIBITION.—The Argonauts are going to hold an International Exposition of Arts and Manufactures, in the city of Philadelphia, in 1876—the centennial anniversary of the birth of the nation. The exhibition is to be held in a park of 2,700 acres, and the arrangements will be on a very extensive scale. A national commission, representing forty-two states, has already been appointed by the President, General Grant, and a commission representing the city of Philadelphia is now in Europe, en route to Vienna, for the purpose of representing the objects of the exhibition to the Viennese, and reporting to the Philadelphia authorities any arrangements they may observe at the Vienna Exhibition which will further the objects of their own.

THE SHAH AT WOOLWICH.—The Duke of Cambridge at Woolwich intimated to our Royal guest that he had been commissioned by the Sovereign, and the Government to request his Majesty's acceptance of a British field-gun as a souvenir of his visit to Woolwich, and requested him to select the piece for which he had the most fancy. The Shah at once chose a nine-pounder of the newest pattern and in thanking his Royal Highness observed that, whenever in his own capital of Teheran he saw the gun England had that day presented him with he would remember a day that he had spent so pleasantly and profitably. He said further that it had given him all the greater pleasure to witness British artillery practice because the Persian artillery had been trained by British officers, its system was in its nature essentially on the British type, and, in fact, it might be considered an offshoot and child of the British artillery.

A SUBSTITUTE FOR CHURCH BELLS.—At a time when efforts are being made in different parts of the country to raise peals of church bells a suggestion on the subject is opportune. Dr. Ferdinand Bakker, of Malvern House, South Hackney, writes suggesting the use of steel bars as a substitute for cast bells. They are, he says, introduced in the United States and Germany with great success, and would form a new branch of industry should the manufacture of them be taken up in this country. There is not only a large area for them in England, but a great demand may be expected from the flourishing colonies of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and India, as soon as they are known in those regions. The following outlines will explain their particular merits, combined with cheapness of production:—Steel bars produce a very pure, distinct, and particularly melodious sound, with many other great advantages over church bells of moderate size. The power of a clear

and sonorous sound can be obtained equally well, if not superior, to that cast from bell-metal or steel. Their weight will be light in comparison to the present ponderous productions. They will not burden the steeple so much, and, consequently, will give more scope for architectural design, and have the merit of far-sounding. Their winding and hanging up will not be so difficult, dangerous, and expensive. They are not liable to crack, as is often the occurrence with bells, and are therefore adapted for use in any climate. By a simple and mechanical contrivance they are more easily set in motion. The cost, compared with manufactured cast bells, is so trivial that small churches and chapels, and especially mission stations abroad, will be enabled to secure a peal. Three or four steel bars, forming a peal whose weight would not exceed 100 lb., could be manufactured for 11s. or 12s., whereas only three cast bells of the same power would at least amount to 50s. or 60s.

ALPHABETICAL CONUNDRUMS.

WHY is the letter A like the meridian? Because it's the middle of day.

Why is the letter B like a hot fire? Because it makes oil boil.

Why is the letter C like the ocean? Because it makes a sea (O).

Why is the letter D like a fallen angel? Because by associating with evil it becomes a Devil.

Why is the letter E like the end of time? Because it is the beginning of eternity.

Why is the letter F like death? Because it makes all fall.

Why is the letter G like wisdom? Because it is the beginning of goodness and goodness.

Why is the letter H like the dying words of Adams? "This is the end of earth."

Why is the letter I like the American revolution? Because it is the beginning of independence.

Why is the letter J like the end of spring? Because it is the beginning of June.

Why is the letter K like a pig's tail? Because it is the latter end of pork.

Why is the letter L like a young lady giving away her sweetheart to another? Because it makes over a lover.

Why is the letter M like the first glass of rum? Because it is the beginning of misery.

Why is the letter N like a newly married woman? Because it is the end of the maiden.

Why is the letter O like a courageous woman in disguise? Because it makes her a hero.

Why is the letter P like two winds meeting? Because it makes air a pair.

Why is the letter Q like a king? Because it is attached to the queen.

Why is the letter R like a treaty ratified? Because it ends a war.

Why is the letter S like the end of dogs? Because it is the beginning of sausages.

Why is the letter T like a victory? Because it is the end of conquest.

Why is the letter U like fragrance? Because it is the centre of the bud.

Why is the letter V like two extremes? Because it is the beginning of vice and virtue.

Why is the letter W like a dying Christian? Because it is the end of sorrow.

Why is the letter X like a scolding wife? Because it is cross.

Why is the letter Y like the beginning of a conundrum? Because it is why (Y).

Why is the letter Z like S? Because it is (is).

THE BRIGHTON AQUARIUM.—Some hundreds of eggs of the dog-fish have now been laid by the Norse-hound and Rough-hound, and are most of them, slowly but, as it seems, surely maturing. The first egg was deposited nearly six months ago, and in this instance the young fish will, to all appearance, very shortly release itself from its parchment-like shell. It is instructive to observe the provision nature has made against the contingency of change of position which from the conditions of their native element these eggs are liable to. Whichever way the egg is turned the balance of the embryo is so nicely adjusted that it instantaneously rises to the upper surface of the yolk. It is already known, from growths on the outside of dog-fish eggs found at sea, with the embryo alive, that considerable time is required for development; but as the dates of the deposit of the eggs in the aquarium have been carefully noted, it will be possible to ascertain the exact time required for hatching. Many of the eggs are so far matured that the movements of the young fish can be distinctly seen through the glass of the tank.

WORK.—Young men sometimes think that it is not respectable to be at work. They imagine that there is some character of disgrace or degradation belonging to toil. No greater mistake could be made. In-

stead of being disgraceful to engage in work it is especially honourable. It is the useless, not the useful man who does nothing, who eats the bread he does not earn, who relies upon others to support his life. It is he who is not respectable, because he is doing nothing to command respect. It is surprising to see how many young men there are at the present day who are growing up in habits of idleness. Having nothing else to do, their nights and often their days are spent in places of ill repute. Craving excitement, they seek the gaming-table. They find a stimulant in intoxicating drink. They look upon labour with aversion, if not with absolute repugnance, and follow courses which end only in shame. How many men now in middle life look back with regret upon the many lost moments spent by them in idleness, and lament that their lives are now beyond retrieval. Prepare, young men, while yet you have a chance, against such a sorrowful period. Do not allow yourselves to grow up without anything to do. Believe that any labour that will furnish occupation for your minds and hands is better than a life which accomplishes nothing and which will by-and-by be full of misery.

FACETIE.

It seems an impossibility for two silly lovers ever to agree, since between them there is no understanding.

An Irish paper states that the salmon in the Boyne are so numerous that "they are shouldering each other out of the river."

SERIOUS NO FAULTS.—A Quaker having sold a fine-looking but blind horse, asked the purchaser, "Well, my friend, dost thou see any fault in him?" "No," was the answer. "Neither will he see any fault in thee," said old Broadbrim.

KENTUCKY WIT.—Kentucky wit is sometimes pretty sharp, even if a little homely. A farmer being asked the other day if a daughter recently married was still living with him, replied: "No, sir! When one of my gals swarms she must hunt her own hive."

PNEUMONIA.—"Wife, do you know that I have got the pneumonia?" "Now monks, indeed! Such extravagance! You're the spendthrift man I ever did see, to go and lay out money for such trash when I need a new bonnet so much."

PHRENOLOGICAL VIEW OF SOCIAL RANK.

"Who is that venerable party the two Miss Bottibols are talking to?"

"I believe his name is Sir Rigby Digby."

"Er—baronet, of course; not knight?"

"Baronet, I think. But why of course?"

"Well—er—the shape of his cranium induces me to believe—er—that the distinction is more likely to have been inherited than acquired!"—Punch.

EQUAL TO THE SITUATION.—The owner of a tenement house informed his tenants the other day that he was going to raise their rents all round, whereupon they held a meeting, and passed a resolution of thanks to the landlord for "promising to raise their rents, as the times were hard, and they feared without his assistance they could not be raised at all."

"DRINK, PRETTY CREATURE, DRINK!"

ALICE.—"Do you know, uncle, that that horrid Mr. Binks declares you have taken to hard drinking?"

UNCLE GEORGE.—"Not true, my dear. No! Never drank easier in my life!"—Fun.

REASONABLE.—In an advertisement of a baker's business for sale the following appears, "Death the sole reason for leaving." It would be hard to find any more important cause for vacating an establishment sacred to the staff of life. Yet "dead" "uns" are always to be found at a baker's.—Fun.

PLEASANT FOR JOHN!

Mrs. Blank.—"Oh, Mr. Johns, I was so pleased to meet your sisters the other evening at the Smiths'. Such nice girls! So good looking!"

Johns makes an indistinct remark. A pause.

Mrs. B. (anxious to be still more polite): "I should never have guessed they were your sisters, you know."—Fun.

OYSTERS EXTRAORDINARY.—A Georgia reporter thus boasts of the oysters on the coast of that state:—"The smallest ones that can be found are 14 inches long, 4 inches wide, and 12 inches in circumference. The larger ones are pulled out with a steam dredge."

SELF-DENIAL.

Affectionate Wife:—"Well, Sammy dear, as you do not seem to like it, we will not go to the opera to-night—but you'll buy me a new spring shawl, won't you, dear?"

THE SEX OF THE SUN.—Since his departure and during his absence from "the land of the East" and "the clime of the sun," the Shah has instituted a new order bearing the name of that luminary. The Order of the Sun is for ladies only. The institution of this order is a remarkable step on the part of a

Eastern potentate. It is a symbolical assertion of the rights of woman, and something more. Hitherto the sun and moon, respectively, have been considered the celestial representatives of the two sexes—the moon corresponding to the softer sex. In creating the Order of the Sun for that sex exclusively the Shah has, to the extent of his authority, put it in the place of the other. When he gets back will he put it in the other's habitations? Will he promote the inmates of the anderoon to knickerbockers?—*Punch*.

A YOUNG COLONEL.

Governess (reading): "And he would fain have filled his belly with the hucks that the swine did eat—"

Master Tom: "But why didn't he kill a pig, and make some bacon?"—*Pun.*

A MOTHER'S PLACE.—A young man met a young lady at a ball. After talking about the weather and other things, he asked, very abruptly, "Where is your mother?" "Oh," said the sweet damsel, "I have left her at home. I generally do when I come to a ball; what is home without a mother?"

A XIX.

Hospitable Lady (with interesting Daughters): "Ah! How do you do, Captain Lovell? What an age since we met! Are you engaged this evening?"

Soft-Hearted Captain (who likes all interesting Daughters): "Er—No!"

Hospitable Lady: "Then come and dine with us!"

Soft-Hearted Captain: "You're very kind! Most happy! At what o'clock?"

Hospitable Lady: "A quarter to eight; as a revoir!"

Soft-Hearted Captain (suddenly recollecting that he has completely forgotten who the Hospitable Lady is, and not liking to say so): "O—er—hum! Ah! by-the-by—er—where are you staying now?"

Hospitable Lady: "Oh, the same old place—No. 16, As. revoir!"—[Exit Hospitable Lady.]—*Punch*.

RETAILING.—"Do you retail things here?" asked a green-looking specimen of humanity as he poked his nose into a drug shop. "Yes, sir," replied the man, thinking he had a customer. "Then I wish you would retail my dog—he had it bitten off about a month ago." And greeny strolled down the street with one eye closed.

IRISH IDEAL OF THEMIS.

Biddy (to Pat in charge about a difficulty): "Nerve fear, Pat! Shure y've got an upright jidge to thry ye!"

Pat: "Ah, Biddy darlin', the divel an upright jidge I want! 'Tis worse than'll lane a little!"—*Punch*.

A MODERN DEMOSTHENES opened his oration by saying, "Feller-citizens, ef I had been eatin' dried apples for a month, I couldn't feel more swelled up dan I am dis miuit wid pride and vanity at seein' such full 'tendance har dia evenin'."

POSITIVE PROOF.

Lawrence: Not care for you now, Emily! Why, didn't I sit fourteen times for my photograph last week, on purpose to please you?"—*Punch*.

IDENTITY.

Mrs. Mangles: "Bless yer, Mrs. Donyvan, my dear, I see Shahw, the Lifeguardsman, hover and hover again at Ashtley's ven I was a gal, an' this one ain't a bit like 'im!"—*Punch*.

NOURISHMENT.—It is a good thing to have proper nourishment, particularly for invalids. The Englishman builds his on beer; the Frenchman on delicate dishes; the German on a generous combination of beer and kraut; as we infer from the reply of a good Teuton, who on being asked how much sauerkraut he had put up for winter use, replied: "I've not got much; only ten barrels—just for illness!"

A QUEER CUSTOMER.

A man passing a certain street was seized by a tout of a clothing shop, who, without ceremony, pulled him into the shop, and began puffing up his fine ready-made clothing. Being old and infirm he made little resistance, but asked the man if he was master of the place.

"No, sir," said the tout, "but I will bring him immediately."

The man returned with his master to whom he put the same question:

"Are you master of this shop, sir?"

"Yes, sir; what can I do for you?"

"Only," he replied, "just hold your man a minute while I go out."

THE RULING PASSION.—A certain maiden lady was twice in her lifetime engaged to be married, and twice some unforeseen event interposed to destroy her hopes of matrimonial bliss. Hers was a sad case. Time began to wrinkle her fair brow, and no new suitors were there to offer themselves. To add to her distress she became ill "nicht unzo death."

The junior curate of the parish—a bashful youth—was sent for. The room was filled with sympathizing neighbours when the young divine made his appearance, and after some remarks proceeded to read a portion of Scripture. He fell upon the chapter in which the woman of Samaria is introduced. When he read the words "Go call thy husband," the woman groaned a little, but when he uttered the words "The woman answered and said, I have no husband," the old lady rose up in bed, her eyes flashing fire, and she squeaked out the following: "I ain't a-going to stand your taunts, if you are a preacher! Get out of the house directly! I've had two chances for a husband and will live to see another—see if I don't!"

"PERSA WON!"

Nasser-ed-din: "Enjoyed my visit, dear madam? Enchanted!—charmed! And—by the beard of the prophet—you may rest assured I will allow no trespassers to cross my grounds into your child Indian's garden! Bismillah!"—*Punch*.

TURNING.—A fellow entered a wood-turner's shop, and asked the proprietor whether he did all kinds of turning. Receiving an affirmative answer, he coolly requested him to turn a couple of hand-springs and a flip-flop. The humorist was quickly turned out of the shop.

THE TRUE NOBLEMAN.

No airs, no rudeness, no pretence,
No lack of plain, good common-sense;
No boorish manners to annoy,
No vicious morals that destroy.

True manliness and grace;
He weaves upon his face
A gentle, honest air,
And no deceit is there.

His true address, and not his dress,
Commends him, and his manliness,
Wins the good favour of the few
Who know him well and know him true.

He leans not on the broken reeds
Of ancestral renown and deeds
His father did long years ago
Blue blood in royal veins may flow

And be so cold and thin
That the proud heart within
Warms not in "weal or woe,"
So cold its pulse and slow.

By all men be it understood
The noble man trusts not in blood;
He asks no privilege of birth—
He would be valued at his worth.

Knowing his rights, he dare maintain
His principles without a stain
Upon his lips; he bravely pleads
For others, and he intercedes.

For the down-trodden poor
For the heart-sick and sore;
He dries the tear he finds,
The broken heart he binds.

His word is good as any bond;
He loves this life, yet looks beyond.
Wealth cannot spoil him, for his trust
Is not in heaps of yellow dust.

His face and speech inspire the soul
To upward flights and self-control;
It gives the soul a sense of wings,
And lifts it from terrestrial things.

When he is a host or guest
A blessing seems to rest
On all who hear and see
Such true nobility.

The throb which his brave heart repeats
In kindred bosoms warmly beats;
A benediction lights his face,
His speech is gentleness and grace.

G. W. R.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

HARDENING OF DRIED PEAS IN BOILING.—While some peas become soft in boiling others become horny and hard, and it has been a question whether this is due to the peas or to the water. Professor Ritthausen examined two samples of peas, one fit to become soft on boiling and the other hard, and on boiling them in distilled water found these characters substantiated. The analysis of their ashes gave:

	Soft.	Hard.
Phosphate of lime	10.77	18.91
Phosphate of magnesia	8.14	16.55
Phosphate of potassa	59.74	57.43
Sulphate of potassa	8.10	14.99
Chloride of potassium	4.72	6.23
Potash	—	11.47
Phosphoric acid	4.43	—

From this we see that the soft-boiling peas contain a considerably greater amount of phosphate of no-

tassa, a smaller percentage of phosphoric earths, and more phosphoric acid than the other kind, which, for their part, are richer in the earth-phosphates, poorer in other phosphoric compounds, and contain an excess of potash. In the action of water on those peas poor in phosphoric acid, that harden on boiling, the legumine, which is present in large quantity, although partially combined with the excess of potash, has also its function. It is decomposed, with the separation of a compound of lime or magnesia, which becomes horny on heating and brings about the hardening referred to. Cold water extracts from the meal of those peas that boil soft 4.24 per cent. of soluble legumine, while from the hard-boiling kinds only 1.73 per cent. can be derived. The difference in the amounts of nitrogen and sulphur was so slight that the hardening could not be ascribed either to a larger amount of albumen or of sulphuric acid. Some kinds of peas, however, represented as hardening on boiling, softened when boiled in distilled water, and analysis of their ashes gave nearly the same results as with those of the other characters.

STATISTICS.

SAILING AND STEAM VESSELS.—It seems that in the year 1868 the number and tonnage of sailing and steam vessels built at each port in the United Kingdom, exclusive of vessels built for foreigners, were as follows: In England: 573 sailing vessels, 135,640 tons; 147 steam vessels, 48,684 tons—total, 720 vessels, 182,324 tons. In Scotland, in the same year, there were built 197 sailing vessels, 98,426 tons; 81 steam vessels, 30,690 tons—total, 278 vessels, 129,116 tons. In Ireland: 17 sailing vessels, 8,621 tons; 4 steam vessels, 1,136 tons—total, 21 vessels, 4,757 tons; the total for the United Kingdom being 787 sailing vessels, 237,687 tons; 232 steam vessels, 78,510 tons; in all, 1,019 vessels, 316,197 tons. For 1872 the numbers stand as follows:—England: 345 sailing vessels, 34,159 tons; 342 steam vessels, 292,712 tons—total, 687 vessels, 236,871 tons. Scotland: 60 sailing vessels, 19,414 tons; 156 steam vessels, 125,767 tons—total, 216 vessels, 145,181 tons. Ireland: 8 sailing vessels, 1,394 tons; 5 steam vessels, 9,525 tons—total, 13 vessels, 10,919 tons; the grand total for the United Kingdom in 1872 being 498 sailing vessels, 54,947 tons; 503 steam vessels, 328,004 tons—in all, 1,001 vessels, 332,971 tons. The return for the year 1868 denotes the number and tonnage of the newly built vessels which were first registered in that year, but in the return for 1872 the number and tonnage of vessels the building of which was completed in that year are given, whether registered or not. The difference in the numbers noted for London and the Tyne ports between 1868 and 1872 is as follows:—In 1868 there were built in London: 34 sailing vessels, 7,209 tons; 9 steam vessels, 359 tons—total, 43 vessels, 7,568 tons. In 1872: 9 sailing vessels, 726 tons; 16 steam vessels, 8,285 tons—total, 25 vessels, 4,011 tons. At the Tyne ports in 1868, 19 sailing vessels, 7,928 tons; 66 steam vessels, 16,752 tons—total, 85 vessels, 24,680 tons. In 1872, 20 sailing vessels, 1,349 tons; 102 steam vessels, 33,291 tons—total, 122 vessels, 34,640 tons.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE four bicycle riders who went to John o'Groats' House from London did the journey, over 800 miles, at the rate of sixty miles a day.

A LARGE salmon was recently caught at Horse, Prii, in the Wye district, measuring 5ft. 5in. long, and 2ft. 4in. in circumference, and weighing 50lbs.

DR. ELIZA WALKER has been appointed house-physician to the Bristol Hospital for Women and Children. In future, medical and surgical appointments will be open to lady candidates.

THE Shah has begged His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge to convey to the officers commanding the Artillery his sense of the extraordinary efficiency to which the men had been brought.

THE Czarevitch, the Prince of Wales, and the Duke of Edinburgh each were hanging from the necks a diamond-set portrait of the Shah, presented by His Majesty, that worn by the Prince of Wales being set in four rows of brilliants.

It is stated that when the Shah visited the Queen at Windsor he saluted Her Majesty with most perfect delicacy and grace, and said that hitherto he had reckoned his years from the day of his birth, but that in future he should date them from the hour of his meeting the Queen of England.

INTERNATIONAL CHESS MATCH.—The Vienna Chess Society has made arrangements for an international contest, to which players of all countries are invited. The entry is fifty florins, and the stakes—four in number—will consist of an object of art and a sum of money, together guaranteed to be worth 2,000 florins, a sum of 600 florins, another sum of 800 florins, and a fourth sum of 200 florins. Play will commence on July 20.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

W. H. A.—Inquire at any post-office.
SHAL.—He must keep it seven days after the expiration of the year.

E. P.—Anything would have to be sent, like any other contribution, simply addressing to the editor at 334, Strand.

W. P. L.—Writing only indifferent, and capable of great improvement, which you ought to set about forthwith. 2. Shortly.

DEBT.—In 1857 the amount of the debt was close upon 812 millions, but it has since slightly, though not very materially decreased, being on March 31, 1872, 791,890,970.

T. V. P.—There is a special class paper circulating among tailors which, no doubt, would meet your inquiries. Such matters are not announced in the ordinary journals, being too purely technical in character.

WILTSHIRE DOWNS.—We should advise you to write to some prominent firm which may supply data for the magnates of the West End. We should think that such people would in all probability be very glad to purchase all of it, just as you desire.

GALLICAN.—M. Thiers, the French historian and statesman, was born April 16, 1797, at Marseilles. His father was a working locksmith. His mother belonged to an old commercial family, which numbered among its members Joseph and Andre Chenier, but which had fallen into poverty.

BIRDIE.—Your little piece "Fine Strawberries" manifests fine feminine feeling which we respect and admire; but there our praise must end. It lacks incident, it is rhetorical but not poetical, and it is extremely amateurish in point of literary execution. We should think, however, from what you send, that you might some day, by practice and study, write really agreeable verses.

ROSA.—The blackness under the eyes is caused by late hours, by some over-indulgence, or, as usually, by indigestion. Retire to rest as soon as possible, and rise early in the morning. Walk out as much as possible. Take no late suppers, and drink no alcoholic liquor, unless it be a very little table beer or else claret and water. You might also try some mild tonic, such as any chemist would supply you with—quinine by preference, if it should not cause headache.

R. S. S.—To make gooseberry cheese. From gooseberries boiled with a little water, the pulp passed through a sieve, and then boiled with about one-fourth the weight of sugar until the mixture solidifies on cooling; it is next poured into small tin moulds previously dusted out with sugar. Cherry cheese, damson cheese, plum cheese, etc., are all prepared in the same way, using the several kinds of fruit. They are all very agreeable candies or confections.

A DESERTED WIFE.—In the English hopgrounds the picking begins about the middle of September. Kent is the principal county. The work is done by women and children, with casual assistance from men, and the remuneration is miserably low. Necessarily too the time in which the work goes on is very limited, it is soon over. And when we add that there is labour enough close at hand, and often more than enough, we have, we should hope, said enough to hinder you from journeying all the way from Sheffield in a probably vain search after very dubious employment. You ought to look out for employment in Sheffield. It is always desirable to be on the spot.

ACRES.—Tintern Abbey, a famous ecclesiastical ruin, is situated on the right bank of the Wye, in Monmouthshire, about 9 miles south-east of Monmouth. The abbey, properly so called, was founded in 1131 for Cistercian monks by Walter de Clare, and dedicated to St. Mary; but already in the previous century a church had been built, and in 1288 mass was celebrated by abbot and monks for the first time. The style of architecture is a transition from Early English to Decorated and is very fine. Most of the building, except the roof and tower, remains. It owes not a little of its celebrity to Wordsworth's "Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey," though in reality the poem has nothing whatever to do with the abbey, which is not mentioned or even referred to in it!

C. H. E.—Much of the cheap stuff sold as genuine cocoa is shamefully adulterated. Out of 63 samples of cocoa and chocolate examined by the "Lancet" commission, 39 contained earthy substances, as redile, Venetian red,umber, etc. To some chalk or plaster of Paris had been added for the purpose of increasing the weight! Many of the samples consisted of sugar and starch, with only sufficient cocoa to impart a flavour. Cocos containing a moderate amount of arrowroot or other starch must not, however, be considered strictly adulterated articles, for it is impossible to render cocoa soluble or rather emulsive without the addition of some diffusible substance. It is best to buy the cocoa in bulk. These ought to be of a dull red or grayish colour, but are frequently given a bright red colour by a coating of Venetian red. It is a national disgrace that we have not constant investigations on the adulteration question.

VIOLET.—Your questions, Violet, are almost "too numerous to mention;" certainly too numerous to answer in any full detail. However we will do our best. 1. A woman's heart tells her by unerring instinct how best she may win the affections of a man upon whom she has set her strong regards. By your own description of yourself or any other member of the masculine persuasion might well look at you very tenderly. Beauty is usually so regarded, as we take it. Meanwhile there is not a disparity in ages? 2. Your language describes one of our glorious English women, and if accurate fully entitles you to the appellation of an exceedingly pretty woman. 3. The hair is medium brown, and, from the style of your face, might be worn either in massive coils behind or else flowing at length. But to wear the hair too long always weakens its growth. 4. Use the best glycerine soap, and avoid cosmetics. For the face use the ordinary violet powder—a thing perfectly innocuous.

PECUNIA.—Tokens were at certain periods current in Britain by suzerainty as a rule rather than by express royal authority. They were first used in England in the reign of Henry the Eighth, in consequence of the want of any authorized coins to represent the fractions of a penny; and in the reign of Elizabeth stamped tokens of lead, tin, and even leather, issued by vintners, grocers, and other trading people, passed largely from hand to hand, and were payable at the shops where they were issued. The corporations of Bristol, Oxford and Worcester had their tokens. In 1813 a royal proclamation authorized Lord Harrington to issue farthing tokens, and prohibited the use of private tokens under penalties. Numerous tradesmen's tokens, mostly of copper, were again struck during the scarcity of money at the close of the last century. Owing to the scarcity of current silver money, previous to the new coinage of 1817 silver pieces known as Bank Tokens, of the respective values of 5s., 3s., and 1s. 6d., were issued by the Bank of England; these, however, called in on the revision of the coinage.

YOU NEVER CAN TELL.

You think it is easy your steps to retrace
Before the last pitfall is gained,
That a man can stop short of crashing disgrace
And still find his honour unstained,
But sin is so mighty, and conscience so weak,
And under so tempting a spell
That though you may long other pleasures to seek

Your weakness you never can tell!
The ocean of evil you never can sound,
Its depths you can never discern,
But under your feet there is treacherous ground,
If away from the good land you turn.
You see not the danger, you fear not the foe,
You whisper the soul, "It is well!"
And think that you know just how far you may go.

But you never, no, never can tell!
You never can tell at what moment you'll slip
Into snares that are cruelly laid
By those who are willing another should trip
Where they were so foully betrayed.
A moment's indulgence may lead you to crimes
That merit a prisoner's cell;
Then quench the hot fever of passion betimes,
For its power you can never tell!

You never can tell at what moment you'll hear
The signal of Death at your gate,
Whose knock will arrest your wild, thoughtless career
And bring your repentance too late.
Stand firm then to-day, the allurements of sin
With pride and persistence repel,
And strive for a prize that is worthy to win,
And whose glory no mortal can tell! J. B.

HELEN S. nineteen, fair, and a domestic servant, desires to correspond with a tall, dark and steady young man about one or two and twenty.

MARGUERITE W. twenty, tall, dark, loving, and fond of music, desires to correspond with a tall, dark gentleman, possessing a good income.

ALICE H. dark hair, blue eyes, and fond of music and singing. Respondent must be tall, dark, and fond of home.

LOUISE C. nineteen, brown hair and eyes, 5ft. 2in., desires to correspond with a handsome gentleman; a clerk preferred.

BESSIE, seventeen, dark, good looking, affectionate and fond of music. Respondent must be fair, tall, and good tempered.

ELLA twenty-one, tall, dark complexion, and affectionate, desires to become acquainted with a fair, amiable young man about her own age.

LYDIA, twenty-two, tall, dark-brown hair, and blue eyes. Respondent must be tall, dark, fond of home and children; a mechanic preferred.

WILLIAM S. twenty-one, tall, fair complexion, and affectionate, desires to become acquainted with a fair, amiable young lady.

BELLA B. eighteen, blue eyes, auburn hair, considered pretty, and well educated. Respondent must be about twenty-four, fair, of an amiable disposition, and fond of home.

NED W. twenty-five, dark, medium height, and with good prospects, would like to correspond with a well-educated young lady about twenty, loving, and fond of music and dancing.

CELIA L. twenty, medium height, dark hair and eyes, considered rather good looking, is loving, and thoroughly domesticated. Respondent must be tall, dark, good looking, loving, and fond of home.

LENORA, an Irish girl, nineteen, 5ft. 4in., very fair complexion, curly auburn hair, hazel eyes, considered handsome, and well educated, would like to correspond

with a gentleman about twenty-one, moderately tall, dark, handsome, and able to keep a wife comfortably. J. D. S. desires to correspond with a young lady about twenty, of medium height, fair, loving, and domesticated.

JOSEPH I. twenty-four, a tradesman of good connections, desires to correspond with a young lady about eighteen or twenty, pretty, musical, and domesticated; a tradesman's daughter preferred.

LOVING JOE, nineteen, considered handsome, tall, fair, having good prospects. Respondent must be pretty, of a loving disposition, domesticated, and of musical tastes.

FOREIGN CLIMATE, twenty-four, dark hair and eyes, loving, domesticated, and holds a government appointment yielding 40l. per annum. Respondent must be pretty, affectionate, and a domestic servant.

KATE, nineteen, fair complexion, blue eyes, of a loving disposition, and domesticated. Respondent must be tall, dark, affectionate, and fond of home; a tradesman preferred.

RICHARD, twenty-three, dark hair and eyes, and considered good looking. Respondent must be about nineteen, a blonde, and good looking, one with a little money not objected to.

MABEL G. twenty, fair complexion, hazel eyes, auburn hair, considered pretty, and is well educated. Respondent must be good looking, of a dark complexion, and affectionate.

JAMES S. twenty-three, 5ft. 8in., fair complexion, brown eyes, and in constant employment. Respondent must be pretty, affectionate and thoroughly domesticated.

BELLA twenty-five, fair complexion, dark hair and eyes, good tempered, and domesticated. Respondent must be about twenty-eight, in a good position, and fond of home.

THOMAS, twenty-seven, rather tall, brown hair, dark-blue eyes, of a cheerful and loving disposition. Respondent must be fair, affectionate, domesticated, and fond of the drama.

J. M. nineteen, light hair and eyes, affectionate, of musical tastes, possessing a good income, and fond of children. Respondent must be pretty and domesticated.

HARMAN F. twenty, medium height, pretty, and thoroughly domesticated. Respondent must be good looking, dark, loving, and fond of home; a mechanic preferred.

A. C. W. M. twenty-two, fair, and considered good-looking, desires to correspond with an accomplished young lady, pretty, not over twenty, well educated, and affectionate.

NELLY, sixteen, tall, dark, and domesticated. Respondent must be about eighteen, tall, dark, good tempered, musical, well educated, and fond of home; a compositor preferred.

EMILY H. seventeen, very pretty, light hair, blue eyes, musical, affectionate, and domesticated. Respondent must possess a good income, and must be well capable of keeping a wife; a clerk preferred.

CHARLES CHORISTRESS, twenty-two, 5ft. 6in., fair complexion, curly hair, desires to correspond with a nook about nineteen or twenty, who must be loving and thoroughly domesticated.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED.

ALBERT is responded to by—"Holens," twenty-two, fair, fond of dancing, has an income, and would like to correspond with "Albert."
S. T. B. by—"A. E. R." who thinks she is all he requires.

A. K. by—"M. T." who thinks she is all that he requires.
S. W. B. by—"M. R." who thinks that she is all that he seeks.

A. F. SMOKE-BOX by—"K. K." who thinks that she is all he requires.
JACK DATELATE by—"H. M." who is domesticated and affectionate.

FOND OF FUN by—"T. B. S." twenty-one loving, domesticated, and beginning an excellent business.
PATRY by—"George," who has an income, and is good-tempered.

MARY J. by—"Joe," who thinks that he would make her a good partner.
HERBERT by—"Polly," nineteen, affectionate, domesticated, and thinks she is all he requires.

PART C. by—"Amice S." who thinks she is all that he requires.
DORA by—"C. S." twenty, and a seaman in the Royal Navy.

AUSTIN by—"Marion," twenty, dark, fond of music, of a loveable disposition, and thinks that she would fulfil his requirements.
DOROTHY by—"P. W." who is loving, and very domesticated, and thinks that he fully meets all her requirements.

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